UNIVERSITY OF TAMPERE

# NLP IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

# – EMPOWERING CHILDREN

School of Education
Master's Thesis on Early Childhood Education
KIRSTI RUOHONEN
November 2013

UNIVERSITY OF TAMPERE, School of Education
Early Childhood Education
KIRSTI RUOHONEN: NLP in Early Childhood Education – Empowering Relationships
Master's Thesis, 85 pages.
November 2013

---

Secure and warm relationships between children and caregivers are included in the law of children's day care and the National Curriculum of Early Childhood Education and care in Finland. The goal of early childhood education is to enhance the well-being of the child. This research aims to study how neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) – a practical tool to elicit the structure of experience and change it for the better with artful communication – applies to early childhood education.

The research was conducted as an action research and the data was gathered in a day care center during the 3,5 month full-time participation. The children in the group were from 1 to 5 years of age.

The data provided several areas of interest from which child-caregiver relationships were chosen for the subject of the research. The results provide evidence that using NLP can lead to high quality child-caregiver relationships. The NLP-based child-caregiver relationship seemed to empower the child and also the relationship. Empowerment in the relationships represented itself as joint attention and easy-going joint activities. Empowerment of the child appeared in more positive behavior, feelings of being accepted even if the behavior was not appropriate, and eagerness to join in activities with the caregiver and peers.

Key words: neuro-linguistic programming (NLP), early childhood education, child-caregiver relationships, communication, action research

TAMPEREEN YLIOPISTO, Kasvatustieteiden yksikkö
Varhaiskasvatuksen ohjelma
RUOHONEN, KIRSTI: NLP in Early Childhood Education – Empowering Relationships
Pro gradu -tutkielma, 85 s.
Marraskuu 2013

---

Lasten oikeus lämpimiin ja turvallisiin ihmissuhteisiin on sisällytetty Suomessa lakiin lasten päivähoidosta ja Varhaiskasvatussuunnitelman perusteisiin. Varhaiskasvatuksen tavoite on edistää lasten kokonaisvaltaista hyvinvointia. Tämän tutkimuksen tarkoitus oli selvittää miten neuro-lingivistinen ohjelmointi (NLP) soveltuu varhaiskasvatukseen.

Tutkimus toteutettiin toimintatutkimuksena ja aineisto kerättiin päiväkodin sisarusryhmässä kolmen ja puolen kuukauden kokoaikaisen työsuhteen aikana. NLP:n käyttöä alle kolmevuotiaiden lasten kanssa ei ole aikaisemmin tutkittu ja tutkimusta NLP:n soveltuvuudesta päiväkoti-ikäisille on muutenkin hyvin vähän.

Aineisto nosti esiin useita mahdollisia tutkimuksen aihepiirejä, joista lapsi-aikuinen suhteet nostettiin tässä tutkimuksessa tarkemmin tarkasteltavaksi. Tulokset osoittavat, että NLP:n avulla voidaan saavuttaa korkealaatuisia lapsi-aikuinen suhteita. NLP:n avulla muodostettu suhde näytti voimaannuttavan lasta ja myös lapsi-aikuinen suhdetta. Voimaantuminen lapsi-aikuinen suhteessa ilmeni jaetuissa huomion kohteissa ja luontevissa, yhteisissä toiminnoissa. Lapsen voimaantuminen ilmeni positiivisemmassa käyttäytymisessä, hyväksyttynä olemisen tunteina silloinkin kun käyttäytyminen ei ollut asianmukaista sekä halukkuutena osallistua toimintoihin kasvattajan ja muiden lapsien kanssa.

Avainsanat: neuro-lingvistinen ohjelmointi (NLP), varhaiskasvatus, lapsi-aikuinen suhteet, kommunikaatio, toimintatutkimus

# CONTENTS

1 INTRODUCTION ..... 5
2 NEURO-LINGUISTIC PROGRAMMING ..... 7
2.1 Introducing Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) ..... 7
2.2 The glossary of NLP for this research ..... 9
2.3 Previous research of NLP on the field of early childhood education ..... 19
2.3.1 Case Studies on NLP in Early Childhood Education ..... 20
2.3.2 Conclusions of the studies ..... 21
3 THE DESIGN OF THE STUDY ..... 23
3.1 Action Research ..... 23
3.2 The Action Research Process ..... 25
3.3 The research questions, and the potential implications of the study ..... 28
3.4 Tapping into the early childhood education setting ..... 29
3.4.1 Participants and other stakeholders ..... 29
3.4.2 Ethical considerations ..... 30
3.4.3 The description of the group ..... 32
4 ACTION! AND ANALYSIS ..... 34
4.1 First Cycle – The Power of Communication ..... 35
4.1.1 Action Plan and Data ..... 35
4.1.2 First analysis, implications and conclusion for the second cycle ..... 38
4.2 Second Cycle – Sensory language and other language models ..... 39
4.2.1 Action Plan and Data ..... 39
4.2.2 Second analysis, implications and conclusions ..... 40
4.2.3 Conclusions for the Great Analysis ..... 41
5 THIRD CYCLE: CHILD-CAREGIVER RELATIONSHIPS AND INTERACTION – THE NLP APPROACH ..... 43
5.1 Building relationships and trust ..... 46
5.2 I'll stand by you - an experience of being accepted and valued ..... 54
5.3 Joint activity – different but shared reality ..... 64
5.4 Relationship is a process and combination of attitudes/beliefs, behavior and skills ..... 67
6 CONCLUSIONS ..... 72
REFERENCES ..... 78

# 1 INTRODUCTION

The goal of early childhood education is to enhance overall well-being of the child. Early childhood settings provide various opportunities to develop, learn and grow; to play, have fun and enjoy with the company of peers and educators; to feel accepted, respected and encouraged (STAKES 2005, 15). The National Curriculum on early childhood education and care states the guidelines for quality of care – how things are meant to be. However, there are several situations in which a child may feel uneasy or distressed: starting daycare, letting a parent go on the drop off, potty-time, getting dressed, deciding on things to do, interacting with peers and adults, or having lunch. How can we promote the realization of the National Curriculum On ECEC guidelines? How can we promote to children's well-being?

It is surprisingly easy to find research which reveals a variety of factors that may interrupt or disturb child's development – even if you use key words "child" and "well-being". When well-being and the quality of life is assessed, it is linked with disabilities (e.g. Cramm & Nieboer, 2012), parental stress (e.g. Stelter & Halberstadt , 2011), or unfavorable societal factors (e.g. Harper, Jones, Pereznieto & MacKay, 2011; Ben-Arieh, 2008). On the other hand, there is also research on different childhood intervention models (e.g. Hemmeter, Ostrosky & Fox, 2006) as well as programs to help children solve their problems (e.g. Furman, 2003), which aim to enhance child's well-being.

Well-being, happiness and human strengths are being studied in the new field of psychology – positive psychology (Carr 2004, xvii; Ojanen 2007, 7, 9). Although most of the research in the field of positive psychology is concerned about the mentioned concepts in general, it gives implications of how to promote well-being and benign development in children. Positive psychology, though, has not yet developed a comprehensive system or approach to promote children's well-being. Therefore, I took a step back in time and chose neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) and pedagogical point of view in this study to identify educator's or caregiver's possibilities to promote the well-being of children.

This research studies NLP as a system and an approach that promotes well-being. NLP gives me means of studying early childhood education and care practices from a novel pedagogical point of view. This is the first (to my knowledge) research of NLP which is directed at the educare of toddlers and preschoolers (in Finnish education system children from 1 to 5 years of age).

My professional background is in early childhood education (kindergarten teacher) and adult education (vocational teacher). I am a licensed Master Practitioner of NLP and NLP Trainer – taught and qualified by Dr. Richard Bandler, the co-founder of NLP. My experience of practicing NLP is mainly in professional coaching and adult education. However, I volunteered in a day care center – as soon as I qualified as a NLP trainer – to find out how NLP can be used with young children.

The experiments I did with the children during the first year encouraging – as were the experiences during the second year, when the actual caregivers of the group did experiment the techniques with the group. The idea of NLP as a pedagogical approach grew more and more appealing. Therefore, I decided to conduct a research to **increase understanding and practice of using neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) as a pedagogical approach in early childhood settings**. Since NLP is described as an attitude, method, and technique rather (Bandler & Fitzpatrick 2008, 15) than a pedagogical approach, I realize the challenge I'm facing, and I'm willing to take it.

At the best, this research may extend the purview of NLP. The early childhood education and care may also benefit from the NLP point of view. The results of this research may give new insight to caregivers and kindergarten teachers in promoting children's well-being and thus acknowledge the guidelines of The National Curriculum on ECE.

My challenge was the fact that I am to pioneer the research of NLP within Finnish Early Childhood Education and Care without any scientific reference within the youngest age groups of my study. I chose to write the report in English, in hope to get the research evaluated by the members of NLP community who are experts in NLP and in education.

# 2 NEURO-LINGUISTIC PROGRAMMING

Neuro-Linguistic Programming is a practice in its original form. It is a practical tool which is also learned in competency-based, experiential courses (Hall & Belnap 2008, xxi). Therefore, I do not give a thorough introduction of how to use NLP – it is a skill that develops through guided practice. Instead, I will give an overview of NLP, a glossary of NLP, and I will also discuss previous research of NLP on the field of early childhood education.

The data and analysis may highlight some points or aspects of NLP which I did not introduce in this (second) chapter. I will explain those points and aspects as they emerge during the research process.

## 2.1 Introducing Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP)

Neuro-Linguistic Programming is an approach which deals with human behavior, cognitive functions and their structure, models of language, and human psyche. It is not a theory, but rather a combination of attitude, method and techniques which are used in the fields of psychotherapy, business, sports, medicine, and education – just to name a few. (Bandler & Fitzpatrick 2009, 14-15.)

NLP originated from the early 1970's, when a student of mathematics and computer science, Richard Bandler, and a professor of linguistics, John Grinder, observed the most successful therapists they knew of. Those therapists were family therapist Virginia Satir, hypnotherapist Milton Erickson and the founder of Gestalt therapy, Frits Perls. Their success was defined as an exceptional ability to achieve excellent results. (Bandler & Fitzpatrick 2009, 14; Tosey & Mathison 2006,1-2; Tosey, Mathison & Michelli 2005, 143.) Bandler and Grinder developed a method for studying how people process information, construct the schemata of meaning, and act to get results. That method was called modeling. (Tosey & Mathison 2006, 2.) Bandler and Grinder developed Neuro-Linguistic Programming or NLP by combining the results of using the method.

NLP sees a person as a whole mind-body system (Tosey & Mathison 2006, 2). It studies our experiences, and how we represent them through our neurological processes; the language we use to communicate with others or ourselves; our learned habitual ways of thinking and communicating; and the patterns of our behavior. In this system the neurological processes refer to 'neuro', the habitual language refers to' linguistic', and the patterns of behavior refer to 'programming'. (Bandler & Fitzpatrick 2009, 14; Tosey & Mathison 2006, 2.) As a growth-oriented approach (Tosey & Mathison 2006, 2) NLP is said to be an attitude that enables us to live a happy, successful life. It is also a method of modeling the thoughts and behavior of successful people and of learning to do the same. Furthermore, it is a technology with systems and set of practices for change and improving the quality of our lives. (Bandler & Fitzpatrick 2009, 15; Tosey & Mathison 2006, 2.)

NLP was developed as a practical theory. Bandler and Grinder said that they are interested in 'what works' rather than in 'what is true'. As a consequence there has been little interaction with academic circles and practitioners. Even though most of NLP literature does not refer to it as a theory, NLP is said to have an epistemological dimension – a theory of the processes through which people perceive, know and learn. (Tosey & Mathison 2006, 2.)

NLP derives from several fields: such as gestalt therapy, cognitive psychology, transformational grammar, behavioral psychology, the Palo Alto school of brief therapy, Ericsonian hypnotherapy and cybernetic epistemology of Gregory Bateson (1973). (Tosey et al. 2005, 144; Hall & Belnap 2008, 6-9, 11). With this wide array of knowledge and ideas, Bandler and Grinder used their own expertise in computer programming (Bandler) and modeling the structure of language (Grinder) to find out how the patterns of human behavior and patterns of language actually are processed in the human brain. In other words, how a human brain gets programmed. During the process of modeling they revealed the structure of human programs and realized that the same processes must occur at neurological levels. (Hall & Belnap 2008, 8-9).

NLP has constantly evolved during its existence. Churches and West-Burnham (2008) suggest that because of that continuous evolvement, NLP has several characteristics of

Wenger's idea of a community of practice. (Churches & West-Burnham 2008, 7.) In a way, the search for more efficient, influential and empowering programs is written into the approach.

## 2.2 The glossary of NLP for this research

**Sensory modalities or representational systems**

Input channels, i.e. senses, are channels through which the information about the world is received. The three major sensory channels are vision (sight), audition (hearing) and kinesthetic (bodily sensations). The other two – less utilized – are sense of smell (olfactory system) and taste (gustatory system). We use sensory channels for representing our experiences by making images, imagining sounds, sensations and feelings. Sometimes a memory may bring back flavors or odors. Representational systems are described by language system – digital system. (Grinder & Bandler 1976, 4-7.) In short, all sensory information is both received and processed through five senses.

We identify each other's representational systems by listening to the language people are using when they describe their experiences (Grinder & Bandler 1976, 9). Another way to identify the representational systems is to look for accessing cues (see below).

When I worked with children I paid attention to their descriptions of their experiences and understanding of different issues. If a child was on the brink of learning to speak, I paid attention to accessing cues. All the time, I made sure to use sensory-rich language, and sensory-rich nonverbal communication by movements, touch, voice (singing, tonality, tempo, rhythm, volume etc).

**Submodalities**

Submodalities are the particles that construct the structure for human experience (Bandler & MacDonald 1988, 1). In other words, we construct our experience with substructures of sensory information and the representations we make of it. Bandler and MacDonald (1988) provide examples about the submodalities of each representational

system and how they are used, for example, in changing beliefs, emotional and mental states, and eliciting strategies.

The list of different substructures in each representational system is vast. Therefore, I give only some general examples of their qualities in the major representational systems. Visual submodalities consist of e.g. color, brightness, size, distance and clarity. Auditory submodalities consist of e.g. volume, tonality, direction and rhythm. Kinesthetic submodalities consist of e.g. intensity, location in body, pressure, weight, tactile sensations and movement.

During the interventions, I listened carefully how children described their experiences. I helped them change their emotional and mental states, beliefs and strategies with the help of submodalities. I also read two sensory rich stories, which I had written earlier, in order to test the impact of them in certain situations.

**Accessing cues**

Accessing cues are clues which help us to identify the representational system people are using in a given situation and they also help to identify people's preferred representational system. Accessing cues consist, for example, of postures, gestures, breathing, voice tone, and tempo. Bandler and Grinder (1979) realized that the direction of eye movements helped to identify which representational systems people are using – they also found out that children do have accessing cues at a very young age. People look up when they are using visual system; people move their eyes to either side when they are using auditory system; and people look down to (usually) right when they are using kinesthetic system. Internal dialogue is (usually) located down to left. (Bandler 2008, 65-67; Ready & Burton 2004, 94.) Accessing cues reveal what parts of the brain people are using when they are processing certain information.

I observed children's eye movements. That gave me information about which representational system each of the children preferred in given situations. However, the day care environment is full of movement and transfers from situation to situation, which makes it challenging to read eyes. So, I decided to use accessing cues in reversal. When I wanted the children to imagine things or calm down, I used postures and hand

movements which directed children's eyes up. When I wanted children to listen, I used postures and gestures which directed children's eyes either to the right (new sounds) or to the left (remembered sounds). When I helped a child to get in touch with his/her feelings or emotions, I directed his eyes down to right. I also directed children's eyes down to left, when I wanted them to affirm my commendation to themselves.

**NLP presuppositions**

NLP presuppositions represent the basic beliefs or generalizations of human experience and behavior (Ready & Burton 2004, 17-18), and the underlying epistemological and ontological understandings of the human experience of reality and relatedness to the world. Bandler and Grinder put emphasis on the uniqueness of human experience of reality in their early work (see Bandler & Grinder 1975). Later, different authors have either gathered varying lists of presuppositions (see e.g. Ready & Burton, 2004; Hiltunen, Kiviaho & Vikeväinen-Tervonen 2003) or the presuppositions emerge in text as an explanation or clarification of a certain exercise or NLP pattern (see e.g. Bandler 2008; Bandler & Fitzpatrick 2009; Dilts 1999; Grinder & DeLozier 1987).

In the interventions I worked with 12 presuppositions. I introduce them shortly in this glossary, mostly in the manner I based my behavior and thinking on them. The source of each presupposition is the one I used in preparation for interventions.

***"The map is not a territory"***

Bandler and Grinder (1975, 7) quoted Korzybski's notion "The map is not a territory" in an article (1958, 58-60) to point out the unique models people create of the world. Our experience of the world is different because of neurological (limitations of the five senses), social (language, ways of perceiving the world, and social norms and habits), and individual (personal history) constraints (Bandler & Grinder 1975, 8-13).

I kept in mind that each child had their own unique experience of the reality, like I do. I did not know what their maps were like, therefore, my job was to observe and respond with the knowledge and skills I have of NLP and early childhood pedagogy instead of trying to interpret the children's maps. I kept my mind open, because I could not explain the children's behavior or thinking. All I did know, that their understanding of the

reality and the world was different from mine and each other's. All I could do was to try and enrich their maps in case their map was limiting their choices or causing trouble repeatedly.

***Everything is received and processed with five senses***

We have five senses through which we perceive or sense ourselves, the environment, and the world. We see, hear, feel, taste and smell. These sensations are also used in our brains to organize and process the information. Not only do we receive information with our five senses, we also process our thoughts and memories by using sensory information. (Grinder & Bandler 1976, 4-5.)

I did my best to communicate with children by using rich sensory information – especially visual, auditory and kinesthetic information – simultaneously. That was my way to reach children's interest, and also to give them more sensory material in their maps. My expression in communication consisted of clear gestures, postures and facial expressions; singing, rich tonality and other auditory submodalities like volume and rhythm in speech; and touching, doing with the child, holding children in my arms or close to me while communicating.

***Everything you do is communication***

Every word, sound, tonality, posture, gesture, facial or bodily expression is communication. Even avoiding direct communication is communication. According to Ready & Burton (2004, 24) over 90% of our communication is nonverbal.

I knew that I was communicating with the children constantly. Therefore, I needed to be somewhat aware of the messages I was sending to them. There were no excuses to try and avoid anything, and I did not want to ignore the children for my convenience in any situation. I did what I could to be a positive role model for the children.

***"The meaning of the communication is the response you get"***

People communicate to get certain responses from other people. Every time we fail to do so, we feel that we are not understood or appreciated. The more there is difference in

what response we want and what we get, the more we need to adjust our communication. (Bandler & Grinder 1979, 89.)

Interaction with small children required sensitivity to children's verbal and nonverbal communication and to their responses in each situation. I also needed to respect children's own intentions and goals to be able to adjust my communication for their benefit. I had to be clear that the caretaker's or educator's goal is not to have children to please the adult, instead, it is to give children choices to learn, to build their self-esteem, and to make them feel appreciated and accepted while they are interacting with the people and environment around them.

***If something does not work, try something else***

Bandler and Grinder (1979, 73-74) suggest that professional communicators need to have flexibility – the ability to use several patterns and to experiment with each client to increase the skills – while communicating with their clients. You cannot wait for other people to change their behavior or communication, but you can always modify your own behavior and communication to achieve your goal (Ready & Burton 2004, 22-23).

As an educator and caregiver I needed to modify my behavior and communication if I could not reach the child, or if the child did not feel supported by me either in his/her success, learning and in different emotional or social situations. I did not want to add to their adverse programs; instead, I wanted to give them empowering experiences even after their bad behavior or emotional distress. That would add to children's repertoire of choices and enrich their maps of the world.

***It is better to have choices than not to have choices***

Bandler and Grinder (1976, 86) described choice as having multiple responses to one particular stimulus. In other words, choice means having experienced neurologically the different options and choosing intentionally from them the preferred direction or outcome. (Bandler 2008, 54-55).

When children or a child seemed to be stuck in one possible response to a particular situation or stimulus, I helped them experience the situation or stimulus differently by

overlapping representational systems, by altering submodalities, by using pattern interrupts or any other technique. Some of the children became conscious of this and they began to utilize their freedom of choice.

***The value of each individual is held constant – only the value of behavior is questioned***

NLP claims that no person is broken. Their value remains – no matter how they behave. The focus is on what a person does. If the behavior, thinking, feeling, and communication are somehow inappropriate or non-beneficial for the person himself, he simply needs to learn to do those things differently. (Bandler & Fitzpatrick 2009, 97.)

I made it very clear for myself that whatever the children would do, I would regard them as unique and valuable human beings in every situation. Therefore, I always concentrated on their behavior and helped them to have more choices or learn to do things differently. My focus was on the possible intention of their behavior and I responded accordingly.

***There is a positive intention behind all behavior***

Bandler and Grinder (1979, 122) claimed that every behavior has a positive function – it is the best choice a person can have in a certain context. The positive intention guides the behavior and the person has a context in which that behavior has value (Bandler & Fitzpatrick 2009, 97). It would be irresponsible to change that behavior without finding out first, how to satisfy the intention in a more useful way (Bandler & Grinder 1979, 137-138; Bandler & Fitzpatrick 2009, 97).

The traditional way of working with children in early childhood setting is to prevent and correct "wrong" behavior. I focused on preventing the children from doing harm to others or themselves and observed their intentions instead. So, my preventive and correctional measures usually provided the children more choices for reaching their preferred outcome. If the outcome was dependent on other children's choices, I also gave children new ideas of how to handle disappointment without losing a chance to enjoy themselves by introducing a way to function with the original intention in a slightly different setting.

***There is only feedback – no failure***

NLP considers feedback to include not only the feedback a person gets from another person, but also the outcome a person gets from a particular situation (Ready & Burton 2004, 21). Mistakes are for learning – when they are regarded as feedback – to improve the way of performing (Bandler & Fitzpatrick 2009, 98).

Children are learning and repeating things to gain new abilities and to improve their current performance in a given task. My job, as an educator, was to help them learn by chunking down different tasks and by giving the children plenty of opportunities to rehearse abilities they had gained. If a child was disappointed of not getting things right at the first try, I helped him by guiding through the phases of the performance. I also focused children's attention on what they already had achieved.

***People have all the resources they need for change***

People have the potential to develop. Everyone has already some internal resources to acquire new internal or external resources. (Ready & Burton 2004, 24.)

Even the youngest of children have some internal resources on which new internal or external resources can be built. For example, a one year old child has the ability to gain adult's attention and the experience of adults help in certain situations. These resources can be utilized for building internal resource of believing in his ability to do things by himself and external resource of being able to learn to do some things on his own. I observed the children in order to identify their particular internal and external resources. When they were learning new things, I could point out what internal or external resources they already had, and guide them to use those resources in learning.

***Modeling skillful performance leads to excellence***

Modeling is a process of taking some behavior or skill and chunking it down to phases which can be replicated. Dilts has described NLP modeling in a following way:

> *NLP modeling procedures involve identifying the mental strategies (neuro) a person is using by analyzing that person's language patterns (linguistic) and non-verbal responses. The results of this analysis are then put into step-by-step strategies or procedures (programming) that may be*

> *used to transfer the skill to other people, and apply it to other contexts. (Dilts 1998, xvi.)*

I used the models NLP has already identified, e.g. communication skills, and I also modeled the skills of some children to help other children develop their abilities in those particular skills. For example, a child was particularly good in getting her clothes on. I chunked down her procedures of getting dressed and used it to help other children to learn how to get their clothes on.

***The mind and body are connected***

Neurotransmitters are chemicals by which the brain transmits impulses along the nerves, i.e. communicates with the body. Recent research has discovered that the organs can also produce those chemicals. (Ready & Burton 2004, 27.) Feelings and emotions affect the bodily stance. The body's posture can also induce feelings and emotions.

If a child was feeling, for example, down or tired, I encouraged him to change his posture and stance to help him change his feeling in order to get through the situation. The child could choose whether he would follow the instructions or not. I found out that the children were more ready to discuss their reason for upset, if they followed the guidance.

**Rapport – matching and mirroring/pacing – and leading**

Rapport means joining somebody else in his reality (Bandler & Grinder 1979, 79, 81). Joining somebody else's reality is done by matching and pacing – in other words mirroring – the behavior verbally and nonverbally. You can pace either directly or non-directly. Non-direct pacing is called cross-over mirroring, in which you nonverbally substitute one nonverbal channel for another. (Bandler & Grinder 1979, 79.) Once rapport has been achieved, you can lead the other person's behavior into new directions by changing you own behavior (Bandler & Grinder 1979, 81; Bandler 2008, 32).

I built rapport by matching my behavior to a singular child's behavior or to the groups behavior, for example, by pacing postures, gestures, words, tones and volumes of voice. Rapport had to be gained every day in every situation to result in a position in which I

could lead children's behaviors. When a new child entered the group or I met a child for the first time, matching was especially important to help the child feel safe.

**Anchoring**

Anchoring is a process of installing triggers to create good feelings or new useful behaviors (Bandler & Grinder 1979, 87; Bandler & Fitzpatrick 2009, 68.) The triggers are then applied to re-create that feeling or behavior (Bandler & Fitzpatrick 2009, 68). Anchors can be installed verbally, spatially, or by mime or touch (Bandler & Grinder 1979, 87, 90).

I used anchors to install good feelings in situations where children previously felt frustrated or impatient. I installed anchors to mark the beginning of certain functions, to create certain atmospheres and appropriate behaviors for those situations. Some of the anchors were installed without my conscious decision. Some of my behaviors became anchors which made part of the children curious and willing to participate in functions I was about to begin. Some of my phrases also became anchors for calming down and feeling safe. Once I realized the anchor-function of those behaviors and phrases, I started using them intentionally.

**Milton Model**

Milton Model is a set of artfully vague language patterns which allows people to take what they need from the other person's words and still gain control, because they can decide the meaning of the words for themselves (Ready & Burton 2004, 238, 243). The main groups of Milton Model language patterns are: the inverse of Meta Model (see below), presuppositions, indirect elicitation patterns, and metaphors (Bandler & LaValle 2011, 24).

I used Milton Model in the normal activities and in some specific situations. The specific situations consisted of helping a child to solve her problem, helping children to figure out what they really want, and I also had written couple of bedtime stories in Milton Model language which I read to the children in naptime.

**Meta Model**

Meta Model is a language model which explores the deep structure (full sensory representation) of thoughts and the surface structure (utterances) after the information has been filtered by three universal processes of generalization, distortion and deletion (Bandler 2008, 33-34; Bandler & Grinder 1975, 22). Generalization, distortion and deletion are essential in enabling us to explain our experiences without explaining all the possible details (Ready & Burton 2004, 226). The purpose of Meta Model is to reveal information behind the words and utterances. It helps to bring behavior into consciousness and to resolve problems which are caused by a limited map (Bandler 2008, 33-37).

I used Meta Model questions if a child faced a problem or was unsatisfied with the ways things were going. It gave children more choices in their responses to other people and situations.

**Pattern interrupt**

Pattern interrupt is used whenever there are rigid and repetitive patterns or responses, which are not beneficial to the person in question. You can interrupt behaviorally or with words. Attention-getting or unpleasant anchors can be utilized in pattern interrupt. (Bandler & Grinder 1979, 90.)

I used pattern interrupt whenever the children or a child were behaving or reacting in a way which might harm him or others in some way. I tried to use positive and attention-getting anchors, like singing familiar songs which referred to the behavior or reaction in a humorous way, or making a certain gesture with a sound attached to it.

**Eliciting and changing states**

Eliciting and changing states is a process of utilizing representational systems, submodalities, rapport, pacing and leading and anchoring with the help of the Milton Model and Meta Model and anchoring. The purpose of changing the emotional state of another person is to help him to get into contact with his resources or helping him to reach a more resourceful state.

Bandler and Fitzpatrick (2009, 113, 115) emphasize the meaning of laughter as a means of changing neurochemistry and seeing things in a different way. There is no need to let little harms or annoyances to grow into huge problems by looping the bad feelings and ill thoughts. Humorous point of view will help to deal with them through a resourceful state.

I elicited children's states constantly and changed the unresourceful states into more resourceful states. I used change of submodalities, pattern interrupts, anchors, and Milton and Meta Models to change the state.

**Eliciting and changing strategies**

Strategy is a sequence of visual, auditory and kinesthetic constructs. The strategy is used by going through the same steps of the sequence in order to produce a predictable result. (Bandler 2008, 71.) The need for eliciting and changing strategies is made clear by the example of bad command: People may phrase something by telling themselves what not to do. To their surprise the thing they planned to happen does not occur. (Bandler 2008, 75-76.) The purpose of eliciting and changing strategies is to optimize people's thinking by helping them to understand how they use their senses and how they sequence their thinking to achieve a certain result (Bandler 2008, 72).

I elicited and changed some strategies of the children. In one case I changed a choosing-strategy of a child in order to help him find something interesting (for him) to do. Another case was about changing the strategies of sharing toys with the youngest of the children. I also helped a child to get over the constant complains and "not-liking" by changing her strategy to approach new or unpleasant things.

## 2.3 Previous research of NLP on the field of early childhood education

Due to the practicality of NLP and the founder's own points of view, there has been only sporadic research on NLP, and it has scattered across several fields of study. Tosey and Mathison (2006) report that the research of NLP is thin and dominated by experimental studies from the 1980' and 1990's. (Tosey & Mathison 2006, 3.) As a

relatively new field of study – especially in the field of education – there was an absence of formal and systematic literature review of the impact of NLP n education (Carey et. al. 2010, 6). That gap was filled 2010, when CfBT (Centre for British Teachers) Education Trust published a report containing not only the literature review, but also 24 teacher-led action research case study reports of using the applications of NLP in education.

The literature review in the CfBT report includes the documentation and analysis of 111 references (out of 171), both qualitative and quantitative. Though the review focused on the research written in English, it is considered to provide the first extensive review of the research literature on NLP in the field of education. (Carey et al. 2010, 6, 9.) Search through different databases produced both unique references and duplicate references. The approved references had to pass the scientific test, however all of the approved papers are questionable when it comes to validity and reliability. (Carey et al. 2010, 9-10.)

The findings in the literature review revealed the growing education literature in the field of NLP. Age-wise it varies from children to adults and to all levels of education. It also became obvious that the literature of NLP is rarely cross-referenced to, or cited, though some topics have been researched before. (Carey et al. 2010, 10.) My interest is in research on NLP in early childhood education – focusing on the age groups one to five (1-5).

I will represent only the educational research which has been conducted in the age groups from one to five years of age. As the following review will show, there has been little or no research on the impact of NLP within early childhood education.

### 2.3.1 Case Studies on NLP in Early Childhood Education

Carey et al. (2010) attached reports of 24 educational NLP action research in their meta-analysis. I reviewed the reports and collected those which reported about using NLP in early childhood education. Each report was written by the teacher who did the action research. Among the 24 action research case studies, there were 7 reports from which the age of a children could be concluded – and 1 report from which I cannot tell the age

of the children. However, I qualified all of the reports for examination. The age of the children in these studies vary (probably) from 3-6 years of age.

The goals of the studies (Carey et al. 2010, 61-90) were:

- improving class behavior (6 studies),
- increasing readiness for learning (3 studies),
- building effective routines (2 studies), and
- improving social interaction and self-esteem (1 study)
- developing teacher skills and class management (5 studies).

The areas of NLP, which were covered in the case studies of Carey's (2010) report, were anchoring, Milton Model language, visualization, storytelling and metaphor, and submodalities.

Five of the case studies reported improved behavior as a result of intervention (Coull 2010, 62; Blanchett 2010, 69; Burns 2010, 79; Lightley 2010, 86; Tait 2010, 89). Causer (2010, 82) reported that it was not possible to evaluate the effect on the children's behavior in her research.

Four of the case studies reported increased readiness for learning (Coull 2010, 62; Newton 2010, 77; Holland 2010, 78; Burns 2010, 79). Two of the studies reported success in building effective routines (Burns 2010, 79; Lightley 2010, 86). One study reported improved social interaction and self-esteem (Tait 2010, 90). Finally, six if the studies reported improved professional development, though only five of the studies set a goal to improve it (Coull 2010, 62; Blanchett 2010, 69; Newton 2010, 77; Causer 2010, 82-83; Lightley 2010, 86; Tait 2010, 88-89). Coull (2010, 61) and Newton (2010, 76) did not set goals of improving their professional skills, but reported them in the results. On the other hand, Holland (2010, 77) set a goal for professional development, but did not report whether the goal was achieved or not.

### 2.3.2 Conclusions of the studies

The action research case studies, which I referred to in the previous chapter (2.3.1), proved the point that research on using NLP in Early Childhood Education is scarce,

and none of the research was conducted in the early(1 to 3) years of ECE. The reports were short, therefore the reliability and validity of the studies is hard to confirm.

The case studies gave implications that practicing NLP with children (at least in 4th and 5th years of their lives) can have an impact on their behavior (Coull 2010, 62; Blanchett 2010, 69; Burns 2010, 79; Lightley 2010, 86; Tait 2010, 89) and readiness to learn (Coull 2010, 62; Newton 2010, 77; Holland 2010, 78; Burns 2010, 79). Furthermore, practicing NLP seems to have a positive impact on educators' professional development (Coull 2010, 62; Blanchett 2010, 69; Newton 2010, 77; Causer 2010, 82-83; Lightley 2010, 86; Tait 2010, 88-89). These implications strengthen my insight into the impact NLP could provide on Early Childhood Education and Care.

When it comes to NLP, only some of its techniques or models were implemented, though all of them are central in practicing NLP. All the same, the case studies and the method – action research – lead me to reflect on the possible research questions, research methods and the possible settings for this research. In my research, I concentrated in finding the key elements on which a pedagogical approach of NLP could be based on.

# 3 THE DESIGN OF THE STUDY

## 3.1 Action Research

My choice for research method was action research. Action research itself can be described as a *reflective practice* in which a variety of practices are weighed, experimented and evaluated (O'Connell Rust 2007, 95). Action research gave me a chance to look, think and act (Stringer 2004), and it gave me a chance to advance from "*knowing-in-action*" via *"reflecting-in-action"* to *"reflecting-on-action"* (Schön 1995). Even though there is criticism against Schön's model (e.g. Greenwood 1998, 1049; Eraut 1995) and new, wider models have been introduced (Boud & Walker 1998), my intention was to analyze my own planning, practice and behavior and data (journal, notes, video) through Schön's concepts.

According to Schön (1995, 3-15) it is in common with all professions, that people will inevitably face new situations or problems which they have no specific training for. The uniqueness of events, cases, and so forward, calls out reflective action (Schön 1995, 16). Since my goal was to find out if a pedagogical approach can be developed out of such a practical set of method and techniques as NLP, action research, with the constant reflection, numerous ways of gathering data, and the various forms of data, supported both the research and the goal of the research.

The initial origins of action research can be traced back to progressive pedagogics in 1920-1930's. John Dewey (1859-1952) played a significant role in the development of this scientific research strategy, though he did not create the concept – action research – in his work. (Norton 2009, 51; Syrjälä et al. 1996, 26.) According to Dewey, education should be experiential and the ideas that arise from reflective thinking should be tested in reflective action (Norton 2009, 51). Dewey's statement supported my blue print of conducting this study in early childhood education and ECE – context.

Many researchers credit the development of action research strategy to Kurt Lewin (Tomal 2003, 7). Lewin's Field Theory and the movement of group dynamics were the ground on which he applied action research methodology in 1940s (Norton 2009, 51;

Toikko & Rantanen 2009, 29-30.) Though Lewin's emphasis was on social change and making social improvements (Tomal 2003, 8), there was a continuous theme about integration of theory and practice in his work (Norton 2009, 51-52). I chose Lewin's emphasis and theme as guidelines for this research to steer the planning, implementing of the plan, and the analysis of the data.

The field of education has adopted action research as one of the developmental approaches. Its importance has varied through the decades – from post-war curriculum development in 1950s to teacher-researcher movement in 1970s (Norton 2009, 52; Syrjälä et al. 1996, 27-28). With this historical background action research has established a place in teacher training and as a research approach for teachers, administrators and others who are working in educational occupations (Heikkinen 2007, 201; Stringer 2004, 1). Therefore it seemed a natural choice for me as a student of education, NLP Trainer and a pedagogue.

Action research is a systematic process of gathering information and making a change. Action research is useful, for example, for developing practice, solving problems, and developing professional skills. The researcher is an active participant in the process, whose subjectivity and influence on other participants is declared. (O'Connel Rust 2007, 96; Stringer 2004, 5, 30; Tomal 2003, 5.) Because the researcher is participatory part of the research, the focus is in the research questions or task at hand – not in generating applicable findings. However, action research may provide information that leads into generating a theory. (O'Connell Rust 2007, 96.) I was aware that this research may not necessarily provide information which can be applied in other settings. Therefore my focus was in generating a practical theory of using NLP pedagogically in an early childhood setting. Simultaneously I was developing my understanding and skills as a NLP Practitioner (or Master Practitioner).

Throughout the research I aimed to discover the "what, how, where, with whom and when" of the pedagogic use of NLP with children in their early years as a part of the children's daycare facility. At the same time, my goal was to develop my theoretical and practical understanding of the positive effects of this approach on the children. Action research is always about improving practice and understanding (Stringer 2004, 5),

therefore, my personal development as a pedagogue and a NLP practitioner had a remarkable role in this study.

Action research follows the phases of basic research otherwise, but it adds an action phase to it. The action can be some sort of intervention or experiment which will be carried out and then carefully analyzed and reported. After the analysis you can follow the leads the results have given you. (Stringer 2004, 4.)

Stringer (2004, 5) has stated several different areas in which action research can focus on. This research focused on:

- Changing traditional ECE **practice** or constructing a practice and behaviors by using emerging understandings and testing them.
- **Changing** and thus improving my own practices and behaviors both as a kindergarten teacher and a NLP practitioner.
- **Reflecting** my own practices, situations, and behaviors through data. Reflecting the epiphanies and concepts which rise out of data with theories or at least with other research on that concept.
- **Sharing** my own points of views with others through this report and the possible later publications which might follow.

- Making an effort to find practical results and redefining them to confirm the results of the data analysis by **repeating** cycles of research.

## 3.2 The Action Research Process

As I mentioned before, the process of action research follows the lines of basic research and adds an action phase to it. Action research differentiates from basic research also with its cyclical nature (Stringer 2004, 13). The phases of an action research can be described as follows:

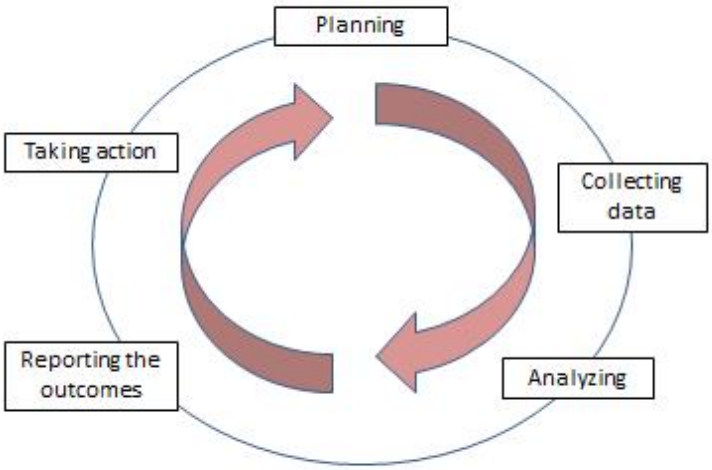


FIGURE 1. Action research cycle (Stringer 2004, 11; Syrjälä et al. 1996, 39-51)

The phases – planning, collecting data, analyzing, reporting, and taking action – do not necessarily follow each other in that specific order. The researcher stays sensitive to the process and its practicality by reflecting every step of the research. Therefore, the researcher may proceed in a different order and/or form sub-cycles in different points of the research process. (Toikko & Rantanen 2009, 64-72.)

As an example of a cyclical action research process I represent a simplified plan of the phases in the research:

a) A question, a problem or an idea drives a researcher to examine the subject by observations, conversations, and reviewing literature preliminarily.
b) The researcher makes plans for what action to take, for either to collect the information needed for change or to change the behavior or practice in chosen ways.
c) The researcher collects data even before the intervention, analyses, and writes a short report of it to be able to plan the intervention.

d) The researcher carries out the intervention, collects data, analyses it, and reports it. The outcomes lead the researcher to the relevant theoretical information, which is reflected as part of the data and with the rest of the data.
e) Phases c – d are repeated until the question can be answered or the problem is solved. The outcomes of each cycle determine whether the cycle needs to be repeated or has the data reached the saturation point.

My research plan consisted of three cycles. First cycle included Action Plan, First Intervention and Analysis. The second cycle included Second Action Plan, Second Intervention and Analysis. The third cycle included Great Analysis in which I reflected NLP and the findings abductively with emerging epiphanies.

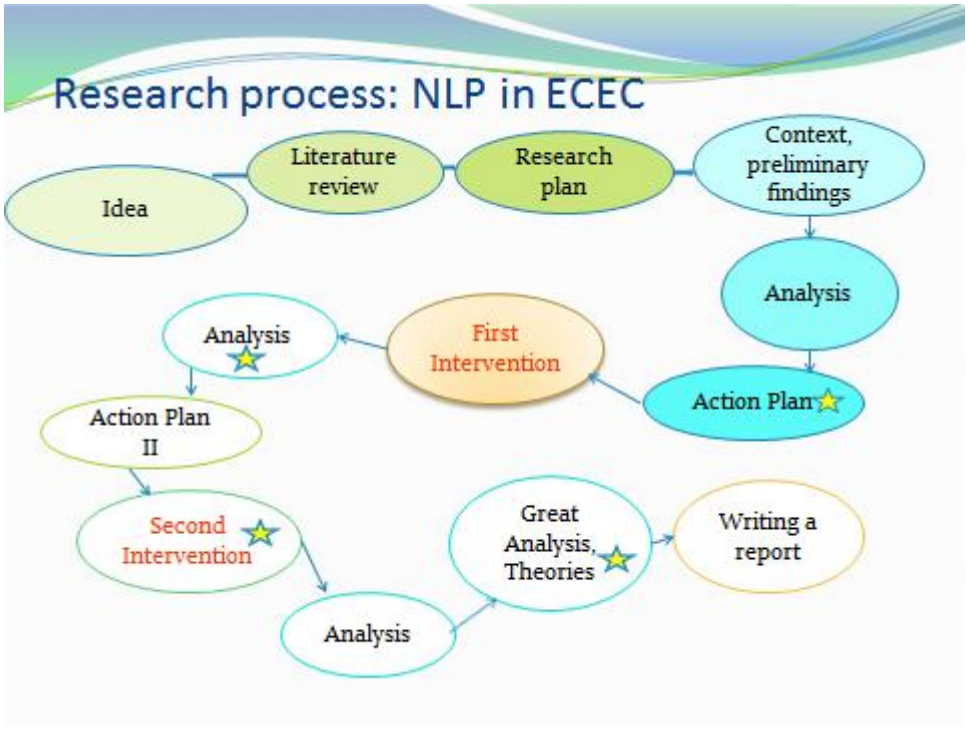


FIGURE 2. The Research Process of this study

## 3.3 The research questions, and the potential implications of the study

In order to get started, I needed to define my research questions. In action research the focusing of the study requires defining the issues of concern, stating the issue as a problem, converting the problem into a question, and stating the research objective (Stringer 2004, 47). My issue was that NLP is mostly used with adults, and a great deal of the programming is needed because of the life-long programs (mental representations of reality, beliefs, and behaviors) interfere with achieving desired outcomes in present life. I thought that if the children learned NLP skills, or at least there were parents, caretakers and educators who were able to influence on the programs, the children might get empowered or at least grow up to be empowered people.

The problem was that NLP had not yet reached the field of early childhood education (Finland) or to parenting and caretaking of children from 1 to 5 years of age. There is not enough recorded experience of using NLP with children, and there are no NLP Trainers and practitioners who have studied the subject scientifically, and the NLP literature does not reach to the very early years of human life. My intention was to apply NLP with children from one to five years of age because that would cover "the early years" to which NLP literature seldom reaches.

The objective of this research was to find out if a pedagogical approach of NLP can be generated, and if yes, what would be the key features of that. I had two viewpoints in this research – the systemic viewpoint of NLP as an all-inclusive model, and the pedagogue's viewpoint as a practitioner of ECE and NLP.

My research question was:

*In what ways can neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) renew early childhood education pedagogics?*

The sub-questions were:

- How to apply the principles, the techniques and the methods of NLP with children from one to five years of age?
- What methods or techniques of NLP require a modification in order to work with

children and what would those modifications be?

This study is probably the first of the kind in early childhood education and care – on scientific terms. Therefore, it may open a new point of view in assessing good quality education and care within the age groups from 1 to 5. At the minimum, this study will confirm or add on the knowledge in the field of NLP – hopefully providing useful information for the NLP community. At the maximum, it may point me a way in building scientifically sound NLP-pedagogy – that is – a NLP-based pedagogy which takes into consideration the latest knowledge of child development, learning and neuro-cognition.

## 3.4 Tapping into the early childhood education setting

### 3.4.1 Participants and other stakeholders

Action research participants consist of those people who are part of the study, are affected by it, or have an effect on it (Stringer 2004, 48). The primary participants and subjects in this study were the children and myself as an day care teacher of a day care group. I chose the participants by using typical sampling (Stringer 2004, 50), because I wanted to conduct the research in a typical early childhood education setting with children from one to five years of age.

The chosen group was a sibling group. There were eighteen children – from 10 months to five years of age – in the group. Five of the children were under two years of age. One of the children was three years old. Four of the children were four years of age, and five of the children 5 years. Children were active subjects who provided the data by interacting with me (who had a double-role) and each other. Their reactions, behaviors and changes in those behaviors not only provided the objects for observations – they also influenced greatly to the intervention plans and to the actual interventions.

The personnel of the group consisted of two day care teachers and a care giver. One of the day care teachers and the care giver provided information of the group and individual children. They also had a central role in everyday evaluation and enabling the new aspects which derived from using NLP.

I was employed to the second day care teacher in that group for the duration of the research. The researcher in action research is supposed to be subjectively involved and interact with the participants by taking a certain position in the context of the research (Stringer 2004, 28), therefore, I had a double-role as a member of the personnel and the researcher. The fact that I was one of the team members in that child group gave me a chance to practice NLP in actual work, in natural setting, and with all the responsibilities and challenges educators and caregivers meet in their jobs. To me it meant a chance to improve the validity of my research.

The other significant stakeholders were the parents of the children. Parents had quite an active role, because they either granted, or not, their consent for their child's participation. They also evaluated the process according to their experiences of the changes in their children's behaviors or skills.

### 3.4.2 Ethical considerations

I learned the ethical aspects in both informing the parents and children, and in conducting the research from the National Advisory Board on Research Ethics in Finland (2009, 4-8). It has stated ethical principles of research. I followed those ethical principles which applied to this research.

I took measures to respect the autonomy of the research subjects. The participation was voluntary. I informed both parents and the children about the research. Parents were asked to give written consent because the subjects were under age. I also made sure that the children participated voluntarily in all the specific situations in which a video or audio recording was used. Since the research was mostly conducted as part of the normal activities, I asked for managerial consent.

I avoided mental and physical harm by taking into consideration any signs of uneasiness, fear or physical fatigue in children. Children were allowed to leave the situations if they felt uneasy. I also made sure that the children would end up feeling happy, cared for, and empowered after each situation.

I protected children's privacy by reporting about them by using codes instead of names. I made the codes for the names by putting the children in a random order and giving the first child on the list a codename by using the first letter of the alphabet as a first initial and the last letter of the alphabet as a second initial. This way, even siblings got totally different second initials. I also stored the data in my private office in a locked cabinet. I asked parents for consent to use the video data later. However, I will not publish the video data or put it on any websites. The video data and research journal will be destroyed after they have lost their research value. The audio data will be destroyed after this report has been approved.

I needed to get an informed consent from the parents at least a week before the intervention would take place. That gave me enough time to explain different aspects of the research for the children, so that, at least the eldest of them would have sufficient understanding to refuse to participate in any given situation of their choosing. According to Stringer (2004, 54), an informed consent should:

- Inform each participant of the purpose and nature of the study.
- Ask whether they wish to participate.
- Ask permission to record information they provide.
- Assure them of the confidentiality of that information.
- Advise them that they may withdraw at any stage and have their recorded information returned.
- Ask them to sign a short document affirming their permission.

With these guidelines I wrote a letter to parents about the research and asked for their consent to the participation of their child. I also introduced the research in a parents evening.

I got one denial and fourteen approvals. Consent slips of three children were not returned. Couple of days before the first intervention started, I informed children about the research. I told them what I was going to do, about video camera, and I told them that their parents have given permission, but they do, nevertheless, have the choice to not participate or discontinue at any given situation.

The child whose parents denied the consent respected their child's wish not to participate. However, when I told the children about the research and showed them some of the things we would be doing, the child changed his mind. After I discussed with the child and the parents and the parents discussed with their child, they asked for another consent slip, and gave their permission. After all, fifteen children out of eighteen were given parental consent to participate in the research.

During the intervention children had a chance to volunteer in any activities with me. I made all the possible effort to respect children's physical and mental states. Since NLP is about helping people to feel better about themselves (Bandler & Fitzpatrick 2009, xvi), I only had to follow the presuppositions of NLP to avoid any harm.

The children's identities were protected with a coding system. The videos are edited so that no name was revealed. The journal and the consent forms are storaged behind locks.

### 3.4.3 The description of the group

This sibling group was one of the four sibling groups in the day care center. The day care center was a central part of a day care area, and it was committed to a project of child participation conducted by Save the Children Finland. The project was based on Practice Standards in Children's Participation (Kauppinen 2011, 4.)

I interviewed the employees of the group to which I was designated. The forty five minute -interview took place on the third mutual working day. The aim of the interview was to find out the team members' description and experience about the group, to find out what was important to them about the group, and to find out how they talked about their roles as educators and caregivers in this group.

According to my team members, the group was heterogenic; the age difference was great, there were children with special needs, and there were a lot more of boys than girls (twelve boys and six girls) in the group. The team members felt that free play was very important for the children, and that the children needed the adults to give them the opportunity to decide what they will do. The adults gave a lot of attention to how the

play groups or pairs were formed, and how the play areas were organized. However, they respected – to a great extent – the boys' (4-5 years of age) wishes to play as a large group.

There were some repetitive activities in the group that originated from the special needs of some of the children. Special needs were mostly related to linguistic development and social skills. The team members also emphasized the role of physical education as an important part of "dissipating the energy".

I observed the group and the individual children from the start of my employment to the beginning of the intervention. I kept a journal about my observations of the group. The group and the personnel appeared loud and noisy. The children were not lead as whole group but rather as individuals, pairs and small groups. The personnel regulated the volume by raising their voices.

My presence as a new team member brought two major changes in the way the group was lead. First, I took a strong role in assisting and guiding the children in their social interaction and play to prevent violent outbursts (biting, hitting, shoving and kicking). Second change was that I used NLP in interaction from the very beginning of the observation phase, because I realized that I will not be able to interact in any other way. I decided to keep record on the pre-intervention interaction experiences and to qualify them to data. The latter decision was confirmed by the experiences with two subjects (JQ and KP) on the second and third day of the observation phase. These cases will be introduced in Chapter 5.

# 4 ACTION! AND ANALYSIS

The action phase of action research consists of planned intervention or tasks which aim to answer the research questions (Stringer 2004, 151-154). The plan for the first intervention was based on preliminary data and its analysis (Stringer 2004, 153) – in this case – my observations of individual children and the group, interview of the team members, and my experiences in practicing the communication skills of NLP with children. The second plan was based on the experiences and analysis of the first cycle. The third cycle was based on the results or epiphanies of both the first and the second cycle (See figure 2 in chapter 3.2).

I constructed the overall action plan on two facts; 1) I had not been working in early childhood setting for fourteen years, and 2) I had not been using NLP systematically with small children. Therefore the idea of the plan was in "starting small" and gradually increasing breadth and complexity of the activities, as Stringer (2004, 12) suggests. However, I constructed the framework for the plans from the pedagogic, systemic viewpoint and integrated NLP to it.

I planned to monitor that integration by taking into consideration the tacit knowledge and skills I have both on education and NLP via four concepts of Donald Schön (1995): knowing-in-action, knowledge-in-action, reflecting-in-action, and reflecting-on-action. Knowing-in-action refers to automatic thinking, reactions and actions of which we are not aware of, or even have been aware of, when we first learned them. If we were aware of those thoughts and behaviors at one point of time, we have internalized them and thus lost the conscious touch in them (Schön 1995, 54). Knowledge-in-action refers to practical theories or theories of mind about how things work and why (Schön 1995, 58-59). Reflecting-in-action means thinking about what we are doing as we are doing it. Surprising results in automatic performance – whether pleasant or unpleasant – promote to reflection of the outcomes, the action itself and the intuitive knowing in the action. (Schön 1995, 56.) Reflection-on-action refers to contemplating ones behavior and action after the situation (Schön 1995, 276-278), which in this research was part of the

data analysis. These four concepts were aids in detaching me of the experiences in the action at the time, when I constructed understanding on my subject and analyzed the data as a researcher.

The data consisted of journal and notes (my experiences), video-recordings (situations with children) and audio-recordings (interview and parental responses). There were 18 pages of journal, 45 minutes of audio material, and 3 hours of video material which concerned the first intervention. There were 9 pages of journal and 2 hours 10 minutes of video material concerning the second intervention. There was also 1 hour 5 minutes of audio material of parent's comments which I collected in November 2012 as I introduced the results to the parents. I transcribed audio- and video material. Video material was later transformed into narrative descriptions of the events for easier reading.

According to Stringer (2004) there are two models in analyzing qualitative data in action research. I used the four-phase analysis which is unique to action research (Stringer 2004, 98-108). In the first phase I identified *epiphanies*. They are the features and elements of experience which are significant to understanding and learning. In the second phase I gave meaning to the identified epiphanies. In the third phase I deconstructed the experiences by identifying major features and key elements of the epiphanies from the first phase. In the fourth phase I organized the major features and elements to a system of concepts. Those concepts formed the basis for answering the research questions.

The triangulation of the data was implemented in two ways. First, I collected three sets of data (journal, video and audio), and second, I used three parties to evaluate the results from their points of view (me, personnel of the group and parents).

## 4.1 First Cycle – The Power of Communication

### 4.1.1 Action Plan and Data

The observation period proved that using NLP in communication is not possible and – in my opinion – ethical, only at the time of an intervention. I used NLP

communications skills automatically, so there was no way I could have changed my behavior for the observation period. The beginning of the period made it clear to me that I would use whatever skills I have to ease child's distress or anxiety, due to confronting two situations in which two 4-year-old children (JQ and KP) were suffering from prolonged separation anxiety.

I argue that, since this was not an experimental research, the possible implications on the reliability of this study were solved by including the experiences of the observation period and the data of it in the analysis of the first cycle. The decision proved correct, since most remarkable insights and outcomes of the NLP communication skills were documented (journal) then. That was probably due to the novelty of the approach to the children and to the degree of change in children's responses. I used NLP without planning during the observation period. However, I treated the data as if it was intentional and planned during the analysis.

I planned the first intervention in order to get a good idea of how NLP works with this particular group. The plan included also goals concerning the group and some individual children within it. I had two reasons for setting goals for the group and some individuals. The first one was to calm down the behavior of the children in the group which – to me – felt very chaotic. The second one was to lower the volume of the voices in the group, because I felt that children really could not listen unless you spoke to them with a very loud volume. I felt that the level of volume would hinder the execution of a central part of my plan. So the plan was somewhat vague – open to modifications, changes and possible expansions of the content. The plan was an outline of the aspects of NLP I wanted to use and a small set of goals for the group and some individual children.

The plan was made for 10 days during which I kept a journal and recorded different situations on video and audio. My goal was to identify the situations in which NLP could be used in its original form, identify the situations in which new ways of using NLP could be developed due to the developmental stage of the children, and to develop and experiment new ways of using pedagogically appropriate NLP. The plan consisted following aspects of NLP (Bandler & Grinder 1975; Grinder & Bandler 1976; Bandler & MacDonald 1988; Bandler 2008):

- presuppositions:
    - If it does not work, try something else
    - There is a positive intention behind all behavior
    - The meaning of the communication is in the response you get
    - Everything is received and processed with five senses
    - The value of each individual is held constant – only the value of behavior is questioned,
- basic communication skills (calibration, rapport, pacing and leading),
- eliciting and changing states (e.g. anchoring),
- Meta and Milton models, and
- setting goals.

The plan worked in six days out of ten. Therefore, I executed the missing days outside the planned timeframe, but clearly prior to the second intervention. I used all the aspects of NLP which I had planned, and additionally I elicited a strategy and changed its sequence. The analysis provided implications of the role of the quality of child-caregiver relationships, the importance of nonverbal communication, and the impact of used language. From NLP point of view it emphasized the meaning of the communication skills (rapport, pacing, leading, sensory acuity, Meta Model, Milton Model). I also identified nine NLP presuppositions which had to be present in order to reach these outcomes. These nine presuppositions were 1) everything you do is communication, 2) the meaning of the communication is the response you get, 3) the map is not a territory, 4) the value of each individual is held constant – only the value of the behavior is questioned, 5) there is a positive intention behind all behavior, 6) people have all the resources they need for change, 7) it is better to have choices than not to have choices, 8) everything is received and processed with five senses, and 9) if something does not work, try something else.

The primary data in the first cycle is the journal and notes. The secondary data consists of 3 hours of video material.

### 4.1.2 First analysis, implications and conclusion for the second cycle

I began the first analysis by going through the data for 3-4 times. I collected lists of the situations, their outcomes and my special markings to identify the epiphanies in the data. I chose 24 incidents which were meaningful and illuminating to the research questions. I categorized the incidents into 10 epiphanies from which I identified major features by answering the questions: "What made this so significant? How is this significant?" I identified the key elements by answering to a question: "What elements were present to confirm this major feature?" I also listed dates of data from which the epiphanies were derived.

The aim of the analysis is to draw out concepts of which the conceptual framework is constructed (Stringer 2004, 108-110). I will discuss the concepts in greater detail during the third cycle as I combine the conceptual frameworks from the first and the second cycle. Here I only state a list of the emerging concepts:

- Child-caregiver relationships – child attachment, trust
- Interaction and communication – learning communication, modeling
- "Rich maps" as resources – choice, peer relations
- Relieving child's distress – anxiety, resistance of adjusting
- Pedagogical skills – structures of experiences, emotional skills, tacit skills in good and bad.

The analysis of the first cycle started the planning for the second cycle (see figure 2 in chapter 3.2). For the second cycle, I decided not have a day to day plan, since the first intervention proved it very hard to follow through in this group. Children had high levels of absence and it was commonplace that the children had already started their daily activities before my shift started, or they had been promised a certain activity before my arrival. Planning was not commonplace in the group due to the idea of child participation. I also realized that NLP is not a trick, it is an approach. Therefore, I planned the NLP that I would follow through, no matter what the situation would be and who would be present.

The other decision I made was to use more video-recording, since I was an active participant in the situations, and I could only write on my journal after the incidents. Sometimes the written recordings were written hours after the events took place.

I planned to use music a lot during the second intervention. I chose this because it proved to be the thing that lowered the volume level in the group, helped children to focus when needed, and to endure in the situations which included waiting. In NLP terms, using music and musical elements made auditory submodalities a tool to affect children's listening, concentration and emotional states.

> *There are only six children (IR, FU, JQ, OL, MN, DW) getting into their clothes and two caregivers (caregiver, me) to help them. Smallest of the children need more help, and some of the 4-year-olds (JQ, OL) are whining and demanding me to help them. Instead of saying the usual – "in a minute" – I started to sing "auta, auta, pyydän sua…(help me, help me, I beg you)" from a Finnish song "Metsämökin ikkuna (A window of a cottage in the woods)". The children started to smile, and they sang the song with me, until and during it was their turn to get help. That became a habit of ours whenever somebody needed help urgently (in his/her own experience).(Journal 29.3.2012)*

This incident and the experiences I had when I was singing with the smallest of the children, play a part in most of the epiphanies.

## 4.2 Second Cycle – Sensory language and other language models

### 4.2.1 Action Plan and Data

I planned the second intervention around the presuppositions of NLP. I set pedagogical goals for each presupposition. Therefore, I did not plan for different situations but I planned where to focus on and how to approach different situations and incidents. The only exception to this plan was a programming for a child. This had parental consent, and the child had a choice to participate or not.

I chose ten (10) NLP presuppositions which would guide my thoughts, actions and behaviors. "The map is not the territory" reminded me to take into account that each child experiences each situation somewhat differently, since they perceive and process each situation through different representational systems. I remembered also to enrich children's maps by guiding them to identify choices via the presupposition "It is better to have choices than not to have choices". "The value of each individual is held constant – only the value of behavior is questioned" was the guiding principle, which turned my

focus in behaviors. That presupposition was accompanied by “there is a positive intention behind all behavior”. That presupposition guided my responses even if I could not identify the child’s intention. I observed children’s resources according to the presupposition “people have all the resources they need for change”. Through observing I was able to identify and use each child’s unique resources in supporting learning. I also supported learning by emphasizing the learning possibilities via the presuppositions “there is only feedback – no failure” and “if something does not work, try something else”. I helped children to get into contact with their resources by the presupposition “the mind and the body are connected”. I focused children’s attention to learning new skills by modeling excellent skills of other children’s and chunking them down to small enough phases for the children who are still learning those skills (“modeling skillful performance leads to excellence”). “Everything you do is communication” guided my awareness to my own responses and behaviors as educator and caregiver.

I chose these presuppositions to emphasize both the uniqueness of the children and the educator’s or caregiver’s focus on verbal and nonverbal communication. With these presuppositions in mind I decided to concentrate on the impact of NLP -language. I also used the NLP techniques that seemed appropriate in each everyday situation.

The second intervention was accomplished in the given timeline – only the programming was done outside the timeline. During the intervention I gathered 2 hours and 10 minutes of video footage primary data and I also kept journal and made notes for secondary data. After analyzing the first two cycles, I introduced the results to parents, and got their comments and responses on audio-recording. That audio was added to the secondary data.

### 4.2.2 Second analysis, implications and conclusions

I worked with the data in similar way to the first analysis. I chose 16 meaningful and illuminating incidents. I categorized these incidents into 5 epiphanies. I added the comments of the parents and the personnel of the group into the data. Those comments were categorized and added to the data concerning each of the epiphanies.

The emerging concepts – which will be discussed in the third cycle – were:

- Child-caregiver relationships – quality, pedagogical sensitivity, trust.
- Interaction and communication – opening possibilities.
- Supporting positive behavior and emotional states – e.g. self-regulation.
- Children as modelers and models – chains of models.
- The meaning of the language – pedagogical use of language.

I used the following aspect of NLP during the intervention:

- Presuppositions – including the ones I used during the first intervention
- NLP communication skills (rapport, pacing leading, calibration)
- NLP language models (Meta Model, Milton Model)
- NLP representational systems and their subsystems
- Anchoring
- Techniques to interrupt patterns, change states and behavior
- Reframing.

The analysis implicated that NLP is a comprehensive system – and when it is used as such, NLP has an impact on children's behavior and emotional states. The pedagogical sensitivity of the caregiver and the quality of caregiver-child relationships became emphasized. There were implications that the language models combined with verbal and non-verbal sensory communication had a significant role in the child-caregiver relations.

Children's learning and interest in learning by modeling indicated that NLP can promote to learning and child's motivation in learning with children from 1 to 5 years of age. Children also gained new ways for self-regulation by using anchors, reframing, and empowering modal operators (Milton Model). The data proved that the children learned to use them independently and in other contexts from 2-5 years of age.

### 4.2.3 Conclusions for the Great Analysis

The review of the two analyses revealed a variety of significant aspects and concepts for the third cycle. For a master's dissertation this data was rich in variation and therefore, some of the concepts and phenomena had to be excluded from the theoretical analysis. However, the exclusion had to retain NLP intact.

The categorizing of the major features and their elements had resulted in somewhat different concepts. Therefore, I went back to the epiphanies, their major features, and elements. By combining the two analyses, I was able to identify the concepts which could be reduced to five main categories:

1) Child-caregiver relationships and communication – the NLP approach.
2) Learning child and NLP.
3) Emotional skills and NLP.
4) Child development and NLP.
5) Pedagogical requirements.

I had to choose one category, which covers all the aspects of NLP which I needed to answer the research question. Of these five, child-caregiver relationships and pedagogical requirements applied. I chose child-caregiver relationships into examination, because it emphasized the quality of early childhood education in its most practical and common form – encountering the child. This category also allowed me to use the data most extensively. On the third cycle – or the great analysis – I triangulated the data, NLP literature and research, and research on child-caregiver relationships to discuss the findings and to identify the results of this research.

# 5 THIRD CYCLE: CHILD-CAREGIVER RELATIONSHIPS AND INTERACTION – THE NLP APPROACH

The law of children's day care (2a §, 25.3.1983/304) in Finland and the National Curriculum on Early Childhood Education and Care in Finland (STAKES 2005, 12) call for secure and warm relationships between children and caregivers. The relationships and interaction is highlighted even in the description of the early childhood education -concept. Early childhood education in Finland is described as pedagogic-educational interaction which contributes to children's well-balanced growth, development, and learning in their different circles of life (STAKES 2005, 11).

Quality of day care and child-caregiver relationships are suggested to be interrelated (e.g. Huttunen 1989; Kalliala 2008, 28-29, 67; Datler et al. 2012, 440). The interrelation is dependent on the opportunities to interact with sensitive and responsive caregivers who engage children in stimulating and developmentally appropriate activities (Datler et al. 2012, 440).

Relationships are discussed as attachment (Bowlby 1982), shared positive experiences (Bagdi & Vacca 2005, 145), and most of all, interaction (Suhonen 2009, 28; Kalliala 2008; Holkeri-Rinkinen 2009; Rutanen 2007). Attachment relationships are described as enduring ties between a child and a caregiver (Bowlby 1982). Even though Bowlby argued that the tendency to become attached is inherent in humans, attachment relationship is formed through repeated interaction between a child and a caregiver (DeHart, Sroufe, Cooper 2004, 207-208). Bagdi and Vacca (2005, 147) emphasize the importance of shared positive emotional experiences in child-caregiver relationships. These experiences are the foundation for the development of social an emotional well-being. Interaction relationships between children and caregivers are based on caregivers' sensitivity to children's needs and the ability to respond to those needs (e.g. Suhonen 2009, 28; Kalliala 2008, 67). NLP sees relationships as a certain process of behaviors and a skill (Bandler & Fitzpatrick 2009, 199-201, 248; Bandler & Thompson

2011, 3458) in which communication plays a critical part (Bandler & Fitzpatrick 2009, 218, 252; Bandler & Grinder 1975, 173; Grinder & Bandler 1976, 13). The following discussion takes these viewpoints into consideration.

The third cycle – or the great analysis – triangulated data, NLP literature and scientific research. The process followed the lines of abduction (Timmermans & Tavory 2012, 167) in order to reflect on surprising elements, controversies and commonalities. First of all, the data was recoded to reveal all the elements which referred to relationships, attachment, shared positive experiences and interaction, and the behaviors and skills in the process of relating. Due to the analysis new epiphanies emerged. They are identified in table 1.

TABLE 1. The data, epiphanies and concepts

| **Code (data)** | **Epiphanies** | **Concepts** |
|---|---|---|
| Journal 6.3.a: IR/ Journal 6.3. -7.3.a: JQ/ Journal 7.3. b: KP | First encounter can make a difference | Connecting, building relationships, sensitivity, interaction, security |
| Journal 7.3. c: CX, JQ, AZ, BY, DW, OL | Familiarity is a good way to connect | Connecting, building relationships, positivity |
| Journal 19.3.: NM | Building security in one day | Connecting, building relationship, sensitivity, interaction, security |
| Journal 21.3./ Journal 11.4.b: Group of 4-5 -year-olds/ Journal 7.3., Journal 19.3., Video 28.5.: KP | Trust can appear in peculiar forms | Acceptance, trust, relating, behavior, communication |
| Journal 19.3., Journal 27.3., Journal 11.4.a, Journal 25.4.a, Journal 25.4.b, Journal 2.5., Video 27.5.a: NM/ Journal 6.3.b, Journal 7.3.a, Video 23.5., Video 27.5.: JQ/ Video 10.4. b, Journal 25.4.c: CX | The developing relationships | Relationships as a process, uniqueness in communication and interaction, changes in behavior, attachment, positivity in behavior and communication |
| Video 3.4. group | Positivity pays off | Connection, positivity in behavior, communication |
| Video 12.4.: FU, AZ/ Journal 19.3., Video27.5.a: NM/ Journal 28.3., Journal 29.3., Journal 30.3., Journal 11.4., Video 21.5.a: AZ | Each relationship is unique and appears in unique ways | Communication, joint attention, uniqueness in interaction, reciprocal interaction, sensitivity |
| Video 21.5.b: FU, GT | Children trust caregiver to take care of things | Trust, acceptance, support and guidance, relating in long-term, positivity in behavior |
| Video 23.5. | Children gather in joint activities with caregiver when you have a reciprocal relationship | Relating, joint attention and activities, uniqueness of each relationship |
| Journal 5.3., Journal 21.5.: Group | Few months of new kind of relationships with one adult changes the way the children relate to caregivers | Relationships as behavior, mutuality, unity, attachment |

In this table the codes are Journal for written data, Video for video data, dates (5.3. – 28.5.), order of events in a day (a, b, c) and child identity code (capital letters). The behavior and phenomena were more consistent and appeared more widely than the data shows. All of the events and phenomena were not documented due to the resources, but I referred to them in the examples, because that way I could give timely context to an event. In triangulation the data offered examples of the epiphanies, NLP literature gave

context and explanations for my action, and concepts lead to the scientific research which gave insights and explanations from another point of view.

I divided the concepts into four categories which I thought would describe the findings of the data at its best. I concluded the categories from the epiphanies and the major features and elements in them. These categories are:

- building relationships and trust,
- experiences of being accepted, valued and taken care of,
- joint attention and activity, and
- relationships as relating – a combination of beliefs, behavior and skills.

These categories form the frame for the great analysis in the following subchapters.

.

## 5.1 Building relationships and trust

My starting point in observation period was to establish adequate relationships with children in order to plan the intervention around the understanding I had about the group and the individual children in it. The plan was to practice NLP only during the intervention periods. On the first day of my attendance in the group I, however, realized that I could not relate and communicate with children without using NLP.

> *I use it (NLP) automatically. There is no way I can start using communication skills only during intervention. BUILD RAPPORT! Match – pace. (Journal 5.3.2012)*

NLP communication skills consist of beliefs, perceptions and behaviors which contribute to relating and communicating with other people. This example of the journal refers to some basic NLP concepts in connecting with another person – rapport, matching – pacing (see chapter 2.2).

The data gave information about the process in which a new relationship would be born. In this study 'building relationship' refers to the beginning of a child-caregiver relationship from the first encounter to the point where the child shows clear signs of

taking stance towards the caregiver. Building relationships, therefore, means the taken action – in this case, adult-initiated action – to connect with the child, to engage interaction, and to get to know each other's ways of responding and reacting in shared events, situations and contexts. The quality and type of taken action constitutes the outcome – the quality of the newborn relationship and the time it takes to actually be able to go from 'no relationship' to a 'relationship'. The outcome of this building process varies from low quality of relationship to high quality relationship. Therefore, the focus is on the taken action and the outcome acts as validation for the evaluation.

I constructed this model for evaluating the process of building relationships (Figure 3). The model is based on the findings in the data.

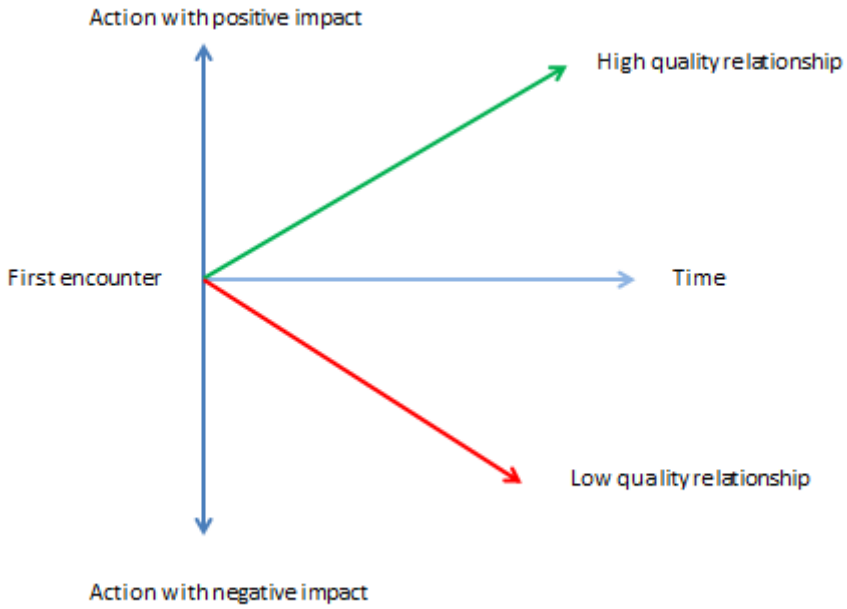


FIGURE 3. Model of building a relationship

In this model, first encounter is the starting point – or point zero. The vertical line point the direction to which caregivers actions leads the emerging relationship, the horizontal line refers to the time it takes to build a relationship, and the lines at an angle refer to the quality of emerging relationship. Changing the action from positive to negative or vice versa can lead to changing the quality of emerging relationship. Time may moderate the

curve of the emerging relationship depending on the child's ability to adjust to the new caregiver.

I documented four (4) events of first encounters. One of the encounters was with a 10-month-old child entering day care. Second encounter was with a 20-month-old to whom I was a new caregiver. The third and fourth encounters were with 4 years 8 month-old, and 4 years 7 month-old children with whom the first encounters took place in distressed situations.

The good quality relationship may form on the first sight – or at least it may seem that way. The following first encounter took place on my second day of attendance in a situation in which I was somewhat disoriented.

> *The child (IR, 20 months) just arrived with his parent. His parent is holding him when I walk to the room, right in front of them. The child cracks a wide smile and I smile back. I introduce myself to the parent while the child keeps smiling at me. The parent just tells me how his (the child) morning was as if I knew the child already. I told the parent that this is the first time I meet the child. The parent is confused and says that she thought I knew the child, because he usually is not that friendly with strangers. (Journal 6.3.a.2012)*

My interpretation of the reasons that made this kind of 'relationship at the first sight' possible is that the following elements were present:

- the child already felt safe being held by the parent,
- the child and I met approximately on the same physical level,
- the distance between the child and me was in his comfort zone,
- the immediate reaction to each other led to similar facial expressions , and
- there might have been some unconscious similarities or resemblance which contributed to the feeling of familiarity.

NLP literature does not refer to this phenomenon per se. However, the NLP concepts of rapport, matching and mirroring, pacing and leading (Bandler & LaValle 2011, 18-19; Ready & Burton 2004, 101-110; see also chapter 2.2) explained some of the elements present in that situation. In this example, rapport or comfortable two-way connection was immediate. Although of the apparent immediateness of rapport, matching or adjusting some elements of the behavior (Bandler & LaValle 2011, 18) preceded the

actual connection. The similarities with the postures and facial expressions (Bandler & LaValle 2011, 18-19; Ready & Burton 2004, 108-109) may have had a considerable impact to the beginning of the relationship. Pacing or engaging in a process of matching (Bandler & LaValle 2011, 18) may have strengthened the new born bond between the child and me as a new caregiver.

The data did not give any implications of how much the fact that only the caregiver was new to the child contributed to the result. The day care center and the group were familiar to the child in question. Furthermore, Howes and Ritchie (2006, 576) suggest that parents signal their child, explicitly or implicitly, that the child can approach the caregiver as an attachment figure. This brings the context – child in his parent's arms, the smiles and the parent thinking that the caregiver is already familiar to the child – into a role which may contribute to the bonding.

The second case was a new child entering day care for the first time. The child had visited the day care center several times with her parent. I had only seen this child once before her entry. The first encounter was short and during it I had my attention on the parent. A few days later the child entered the day care:

> *The new baby (NM, 10 months) started today. It took twenty minutes for her to calm down (in my arms). I gladly gave her to a familiar-to-her caregiver. An hour later we were sitting in the hallway. Children of the group were playing, and there was a lot of movement in the hallway. NM sat in the arms of the caregiver (X) at the opposite side of the hallway from me. She was faced to me and she was watching the playing children with wary eyes. Suddenly, she waved her hand slightly – it did not look intentional. However, I did the same gesture and looked to the same direction she was looking at. She stopped and looked at me and her hand. She waved it again – now intentionally, and looked at me. I smiled and waved my hand, and kept on waving. She smiled and sighed. She climbed down from the caregivers arms and came to me. I lifted her in my arms and we did some waving again. After that, she became 'my girl'. (Journal 19.3.2012)*

In the morning, it took time to calm her down – I behaved under presupposition that she needs a more familiar caregiver to calm down. Later I used the NLP communicating skills deliberately; calibrating (Ready & Burton 2004, 140) the nonverbal clues and emotional state of NM – matching and mirroring her. As NM noticed my initiative, she

tested the connection and approached me. The waving movement turned into an anchor (Bandler & LaValle 2011, 20-22) which soothed her. On the same day we added an auditory anchor to this movement to strengthen the soothing effect. Three days later, the bond or the newborn relationship with NM and me was strong, that is, she showed happiness to see me when being dropped off to day care; she was looking for me with a waving hand when she felt insecure or distressed (new or unpleasant situations); and she sought my company whenever I was somewhere at her sight.

The second case implied that deliberate use of sensitive observation (calibration) and interaction initiatives derived from child's own behavior form a basis to connect with a child and to create a bond in a short period of time. The third and fourth case gave similar evidence – both in even shorter period of time. In both of the latter cases the child in question met me for the very first time, the child had had difficulties during the drop off for several months, and the child was not willing to engage to any kind of contact with the caregiver.

The starting point in both cases was that the parent was dropping off the child. The child was clinging to the parent and pleading – in perceivable emotional distress – for not having to stay. In both cases I, as the receiver, came to the situations, assessed them, and started talking to the parent, apologizing that a stranger comes to deal with such a situation – finally asking the parent to leave the situation in my hands.

> *I held the child (JQ, 4 years 9 months) and matched and mirrored the tone, rhythm and volume of his voice. Child was looking in other direction crying. I told the child that the parent is on the bus, and told him what will happen before the parent comes to pick him up to go home. The child showed signs of listening (the crying lost volume and intensity). Then I reframed the threat the parent uttered to a promise and asked: "What did your mother promise your dad to do with you when the day has gone well?" He kept on crying, but told the answer (playing Star Wars –game). I asked what character is the child's favorite. The child cried and did not respond. I suggested Darth Vader. The child stopped crying, turned to look at me – quite appalled – and said: "Don't you know that it is evil!" I told that somebody may still be able to like him too. The talking went on. I started to lead the child to calmness, helped him laugh a little. We had a long conversation during which I lead him to activities. (Journal 6.3.b. 2012.) From the following day the child had no trouble coming to daycare. (Journal 7.3. – 21.3.2012)*

> *The child (KP, 4 years 8 months) was crying violently after his mother left. So violently, that he vomited. The child kept repeating the same sentence, and did not response to any of my attempts. After strong auditory matching and mirroring he finally started to listen enough to be able to take off his outerwear and drink some water. Since he did not want to respond to me, I kept on talking about how I was new to the day care center and the group, and how I wanted somebody to be my friend and show me the ropes – simultaneously slowing the rhythm of my speech, lowering the tone of my voice, and showing more signs of contentment and acceptance. He promised to help me, so we played with cars. During the play, the parent called to ask, how he was doing. While I talked to the mother in his presence, he continued the play. Later that day, I noticed that he was taking toys from other children without their consent. I told him to stop, and I stayed to follow that my orders got through. During the lunch and the naptime, he asked me to stay with him, which I did. When he was leaving to get home, we gave each other a hug. We had developed two anchors for things going well – "thumbs up" and "high five". (Journal 7.3. b.2012.)*

The third a fourth case are examples of how the same NLP communication skills worked in building a secure bond in a short period of time. Only in a matter of 20 minutes to one hour the children – even in their distress – were able to engage in a new positive relationship. Based on this data, building rapport (calibrating, matching, mirroring, pacing) and leading the interaction positively and toward positive outcomes had a great impact on the emerging relationships. That idea has similarities in Mardell's (1992, 7) notion that interaction has a determinant role in the quality of relationship. Anchoring the positive states (waving, waving with a song, thumbs up, and high five) and using the NLP techniques for reframing situations or events and breaking a state to introduce a more comfortable state, gave leverage to the constructing of a new relationship.

According to Mardell (1992, 4, 6-7) and Ritchie & Howes (2003, 498) attachment relationships are based on separate internal working models (or internal representations) which are based on past experience and guides behavior in new situations. This concept has similarities to the NLP concept of maps. Although maps are referred to as more comprehensive models, including series of maps or representations of every area of life, they, too, are formed of experiences which are unique to a person (neurological, social and individual constraints) and guide behavior (Bandler & Grinder 1975, 6-13, Grinder & Bandler 1976, 4). First encounter with a caregiver seems to have a great impact to

how long it takes for a child to feel cared for and secure. In these cases the time varied from few seconds to one hour – when and if – the caregiver took initiative in connecting with the child. Cases two, three and four also imply that the caregiver‘s presupposition of what is needed can work against or in favor for the connection.

On the case two, the initial presupposition on NM’s first day at day care was that the child should have been received by the caregiver who was with the child and the parents when the child was visiting the day care center before entry. However, the situation later that day proved that initiating the connection with using NLP was all that was needed. On the cases three and four the action was taken right after a few seconds of observing or calibrating child’s and parent’s state, without interpreting and presupposing the situations.

Dilts’ (1998, 237-238) concept of ‘perceptual position’ complemented the construction of the needed NLP communication skills when building a new relationship. While calibration is sensitive observation of other person’s responses in great detail – including muscle movements, breathing, skin color, subtle gestures, facial expressions and eye-movements (Ready & Burton 2004, 140-141), perceptual position is the point of view a person takes in relationships with others (Dilts 1998, 237). There are four perceptual positions: the persons own point of view, the other person’s point of view, the outsider’s point of view, and the ‘our’ point of view (Dilts 1998, 237-238). Whereas calibration does not require interpreting thinking processes – it is sensitive observation without attempts to explain why the other person appears and behaves the way he or she does – the perceptual position serves best if taken deliberately.

The NLP communication skills, represented here, form a basis for caregiver’s sensitivity and commitment, since they guide the caregiver to initiate the new relationship by finding a common ground for interaction from the child’s point of view (second position) using subtle signs (calibration) that the child shows as a pointers , and giving clues how to communicate verbally and nonverbally (matching, mirroring, pacing, and leading). Sensitivity and commitment of the caregiver are considered as key features of high quality interaction and care in early childhood settings (Ritchie & Howes 2003, 498; Suhonen 2009; Kalliala 2008).

These four cases gave evidence that the caregiver has a determinant role in building a new relationship in daycare. Within the model of building a relationship (Figure 3), they seem to confirm the positive impact of NLP in the beginning of a new relationship.

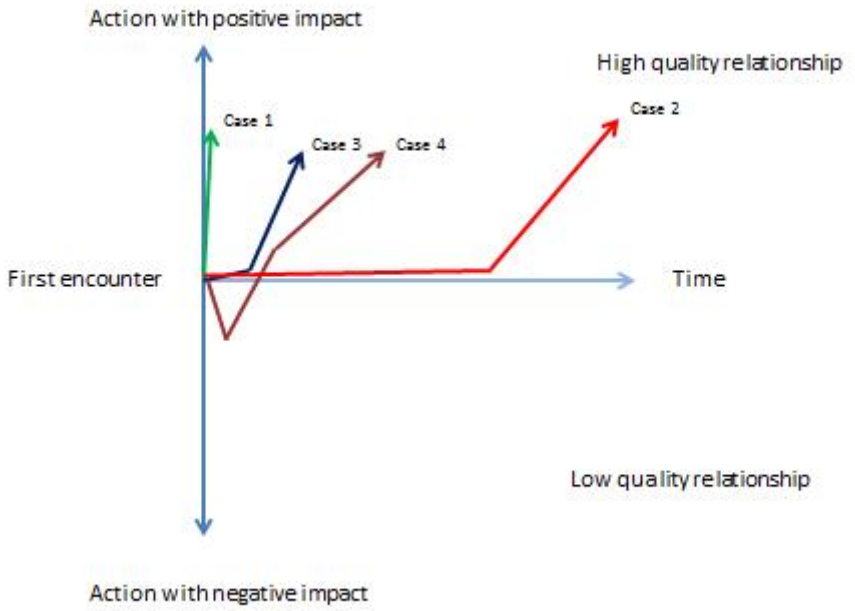


FIGURE 4. The new relationship cases within the model of building new relationships

As the figure 4 shows, that even though the time factor is not clearly marked, there are clear implications that the nature of the caregiver's action on first encounters shortens the time in which the child feels secure and connected to the caregiver. In case two (NM), the first actions (interest, but no contact in the child) on the first encounter, followed by typical 'trying to get the child interested in something new' – soothing method, did not have much of a positive impact. On the other hand, the relationship and feeling of security was built in 20 minutes when using NLP. The third (JQ) and fourth (KP) cases show that relationships can be built within an hour even when the first encounter happens in a very distressing situation in a child's point of view. The curve of the fourth case shows that the initial action by the caregiver is considered to have negative impact, since the child was so distressed that he vomited. The first case (IR) probably just makes the point of the meaning of the right 'chemistry' in some first encounters.

## 5.2 I'll stand by you - an experience of being accepted and valued

Having an experience of being accepted and valued can have a great positive effect on a person's life. In a child's life, it means that one or more adults express their commitment to the child with positive and caring guidance. Positivity, in this case, does not mean that the child can get away with anything. It means, that the adult will show caring and valuing the child even when his or her behavior is harmful to oneself or others, and simultaneously inhibiting the harmful behavior. Kalliala (2008, 17) defines this pedagogical approach as authoritative and claims that it helps to avoid the dysfunctional parts of permissive and authoritarian pedagogical approaches. In NLP, this approach is based on one of the presuppositions.

The NLP presuppositions (chapter 2.2) provide a framework of beliefs which guide the behavior a practitioner at large. To make a point, I singled out some of the presuppositions which – according to this data – proved to be significant in creating an atmosphere of acceptance and trust.

The acceptance and value of a human being – despite his or her behavior – is one of the presuppositions on NLP (Bandler & LaValle 2011,3; Ready & Burton 2004). However, this data showed that the previous presupposition or belief needs to be accompanied by at least three other presuppositions in order to create conditions in which children trust the caregiver to stand by them – no matter what. Those NLP presuppositions are 1) the map is not a territory, 2) there is a positive intention behind all behavior, and 3) everything you do is communication (Bandler & LaValle 2011,3; Ready & Burton 2004, 24 ). This following short event is a demonstration of this argument:

> *A large group of children is getting their clothes on, everything is in chaos, and I try to help them. All of the sudden CX (5 years) charges at me with his fists up, growling through his teeth, and shouting "I'm gonna bite you." Because of the noise and chaos, I did not flinch. I just smiled, looked at him, and said "I like you too." He stopped, looked at me for a while, and asked "do you like me?" looking very confused. (Journal 7.3.2012.)*

In that situation, I knew that CX was not very happy to have another new adult in the group, and he reacted with hostility or ignorance to my attempts to approach him. In this situation, I did not try to interpret his behavior or understand why he behaved the way

he did. He had his map, and I was totally unaware of its contents. I did not know, what caused the hostile attack. Holkeri-Rinkinen (2009, 216) suggests that sometimes children need to fiercely compete for attention, since a genuine connection with another person (especially adult) is hard in a typical day care group setting with a lot of children. As a caregiver I might have responded to his previous ignorance and hostility by leaving more distance between him and me, and that may have caused his behavior in the situation. However, I responded under the idea that he had a positive intention there of which – again – I was unaware of. Even though, I could have responded to him in several different ways (telling how rude it was of him, ignoring him, showing resentment, etc.), I decided to respond positively in order to *communicate* positively or to send a positive message. All this ensured that through my behavior I communicated my acceptance of him, and the value I held about him, instead of demanding him to show me respect. That way, I seemed to earn his respect and interest.

To me, this was an excellent example of Lundan's (2009, 26) idea, that the educational relationship of the child and the adult is mainly constructed in events and situations in educational contexts. In this case, the unfamiliarity of the caregiver, who responded in a way CX was not used to, gave him a whole new perspective of interaction with caregivers. This argument resonates to Rogoff's (1990, 202) notion that both common ground and differences in interaction are necessary to awake interest, and an unfamiliar adult plays an important role in stretching child's understanding. In this case the NLP presuppositions, accompanied with the technique of reframing, provided a frame of reference which turned the emerging relationship to a positive direction. The understanding the educator has about education, of him- or herself, and child determines the nature of educational interaction (Lundan 2009, 27).

Both NLP (Ready & Burton 2004, 24) and Kalliala (2008, 254) agree that the caregiver communicates in every way in any situation. Presence, focus of attention (or lack of it), gestures, postures, things that caregiver ignores or takes charge of are all communication and play a significant role in building trust in relationships. The child needs to feel accepted and cared. Värri (2002, 84) emphasizes the importance of trust, security and integrity of the educator, and Niikko (2008, 76) emphasizes personal encounters with physical presence, understanding the needs of children, and

empathizing with the children and their situations. My point of view is that NLP presuppositions put the educator or caregiver into the position where trust can emerge. Being aware of this idea can produce surprising presentations of how children respond to a caring adult, as the following example shows.

> *A child (CX, 5 years) stands in a room full of playing children. One of the children is standing his back towards CX. All of the sudden CX just pushes the child who falls on the floor and starts crying. I had no time to prevent this from happening, so I told CX to stand by, and went for the hurt child. (CX had already tried to apologize since the child he pushed was crying) As soon as he was soothed and felt better I turned back to CX. Me (with a really worried tone of voice): "Oh, how sorry I am that you caused yourself this trouble." He looked at me confused. Me (with a sad tone of voice): "I saw you do it on purpose, so I am forced to give you time-out. Do you agree? "He nodded. I asked him to sit on a cushion on the floor. I asked him (with a curious tone of voice), if he was sorry, for behaving in a way that gets him into trouble. He said he was and looked genuinely sorry. Because of that, I told him (with a neutral tone of voice): "This is a ten-count time-out. I'll count to ten, and while I'm doing it you will think of the ways to interact positively with the other children." I started counting, using my fingers and hand-movement as a visual enhancer. The other children were watching. When he was done two other children came to me and told me that they needed a time-out too. I resisted, but they insisted on having one. I gave up, and gave them time-out. More and more children kept coming and demanding time-outs explaining how they have done something bad in the morning or on the previous days. The time-out in that moment grew so popular that every possible place to sit in – including my shoulders – was occupied. Children were giving me new reasons to get their ten-count time-outs." (Journal 21.3.2012.)*

It seemed to me that the children saw an opportunity to clear their conscience and feel accepted and cared about at the same time. I was worried about the impact this would have on the future usage of time-outs. However, it seemed that time-outs were not needed that often any more.

Niikko (2008, 72) points out the various meanings of the English term "care". The previous example (J 21.3) includes "caring for" the hurt child, as well as the child who caused the hurt; "caring" as a sign of worry (CX getting in to that kind of trouble); "caring" as taking responsibility and care of rethinking similar situations (the punishment or the consequence of the inappropriate behavior); and "caring about" the children and their future behavior and well-being (expressing acceptance of the child

while disapproving behavior that hurts others). Internalizing NLP presupposition of accepting and holding constant value on a person while disapproving his or her behavior gave leverage for the quality of caring, caring for, caring about and taking care of children in different situations.

In this group, the acceptance the children experienced had a significant consequences on the trust and relatedness the children showed towards me. In my opinion, the congruent behavior and communication of a caregiver is essential for reaching high levels of trust. Bandler and Grinder (1975, 174) describe congruence as matching reference structures and consistent double messages. I constructed my thinking (reflecting the events and situations in the day care setting) and behavior on the NLP presuppositions and techniques. As a consequence, most of the children in the group seemed to draw conclusion that they could reveal their darkest sides to me, as the following example shows.

> *A child (DW, 5years 11 months) asked another child something but did not get any response. He got angry and started to swear at the other child. At that point I entered the room. I said "stop" and went to the DW. I told him (with an assertive tone of voice): "I don't want to hear those words in here." Then I continued with a caring tone of voice: "You must feel very upset to use those words. What happened?" DW told what had happened, and I helped him to achieve his goal in a different way of behavior and communication. As I was turning away, AZ (6 years) came to me and whispered that he had said bad words to his brother couple of days ago. I asked him, what made him so angry. He told me his reasons, and then together we were figuring out if you actually can sometimes get angry, because sometimes it just happens. We also discussed what he could do differently if a similar situation should occur. More children were approaching us and eavesdropping discreetly. Altogether five (5) children took turns in "confessing their bad behavior" and discussing it with me. (Journal 25.5.2012.)*

In my experience, children learn quite early to restrict what parts of them and their behavior (not witnessed by adult) they reveal. As Lundan (2009, 46) suggests, children show a positive face in order to be liked and accepted. NLP -based approach to relating seemed to eliminate the need to hide "the dark side". In this case it seemed that children felt that they were set free of the burden of former bad behavior. That is why I named the event "confessions". Even the smallest of children came to seek shelter from me when they did something bad to another child or when they were hurt:

> *I am helping AZ to write an invitation for another group to sing with us next week. I hear a child cry in another room, but ignore it, since there is another caregiver to take care of those children. In the background I hear somebody say that a child bit the crying child. The caregiver confirms it. All of the sudden (GT, 1 year 5 months) runs to me. She climbs at the table and sits behind me. The other caregiver explains to me what she had done. The bit child (FU 1 year 11 months) is still crying. He comes to me as I am helping another child. Finally I have a chance to take FU in my arms. He looks at me and says "Mother". I whisper into his ear, say "look" and simultaneously point my finger to the ceiling. He stops crying immediately. (Video 21.5. b. 2012.)*

This example was only to show how the relationship with me – as a NLP practitioner – resulted in children turning to me in their bad behavior and distress. How I dealt with GT is explained later in this chapter.

The reason for choosing such responses and ways of communication derives from the NLP idea that a practitioner's responsibility is to help people create richer maps. As pointed out in chapter 2.2 people delete, distort and generalize their perceptions and experiences which sometimes lead to having a lack of choices in responses and behaviors. A caregiver or an educator cannot know what kind of maps children have – as Bandler and Grinder (1975, 7) point out that no map can be exactly the same, since no two persons experience the reality in a same way. The most useful way for an educator is to guide the children towards new choices.

Kalliala (2008, 19) emphasizes how an educator should try to interpret and understand children's thoughts and how they perceive the world, and what happens in their minds when they act in different situations. NLP provides the means to observe how a child thinks – or how does the child create a representation of the situation or event, and how does the child recollect his or her model for a certain situation or event. However, NLP is interested in giving more or better choices of responses and behavior instead of interpreting why certain kind of response or behavior occurs.

Bandler (2008) considers giving choice as the first step for setting good directions. He also prefers setting good directions instead of setting good outcomes (Bandler 2008, 52-53). Early childhood education and care cannot guarantee certain outcomes considering the future of the children, but it can set favorable learning trajectories and change

unwanted directions of learning and development to some point. In NLP, Meta-model is used to identify and challenge the impoverished or limited models of the reality (Bandler & Grinder 1975, 176), however, when you are dealing with toddlers who do not yet speak, the focus needs to be on the observed behavior, its structure and sequence – as in the following examples.

> *I spend most of my time with the toddlers. They are soothed quickly when in distress – it is so simple. Just make them look at the ceiling. Luckily we have a broken lamp in the toilet. FU (1 year 10 months) used to cry a lot when he was supposed to go to potty. First, when he cried, I just paced his rhythm and height of the voice, and said: "Oh, look, the lamp is broken." He looked up and stopped crying immediately. He sat on the potty, and we wondered together who is going to mend the lamp. (Journal 29.3.2012.) Potty-training is so simple. If the child is reluctant or frightened, I just ask them to look up, and only keep them sitting on the potty for a short while. After they are used to sitting on the potty and actually pee in it, I use the victory marks I've seen the child use himself to anchor the success. (Journal 11.4.2012.)*

The sequence of FU's potty-behavior, at first, was that he started crying whenever he was taken to toilet. He did not want the diaper to be taken off. He seemed fearful in sitting on the potty, so I held him all the time, ready to take him off whenever he would show signs of having enough. I added an extra part to the sequence as he sat on the potty – looking up if the lamp was broken (and still broken on later events). Not crying made it possible for him to sit on the potty for a while. After the first pee, I raised my arms with a cheer (his gesture from a book, see chapter 5.3) and he paced that movement. It became an anchor for his success on the potty. The second example is about the child changing from baby-food to "normal" type of food.

> *NM (11 months) does not eat baby-food anymore. I had lunch with her as she was introduced to "normal" food. Before, she ate baby-food easily, opening her mouth quite eagerly until she was satisfied. I decided to assist her exactly as I used to, and not to make a number of the new type of food. She started to eat as usual and at the first mouthful she was appalled at new sensation – the coarse structure of the food. She spilled it all out. I was having the same food. So I took her spoon and put a little bit of the food on it, and then I took my fork and put the food on it. I looked at her, opened my mouth moving the fork towards my mouth and the spoon towards hers simultaneously. She opened her mouth, looked unpleased with the food as she felt its structure. At the same time I was smiling and chewing the food in my mouth. She did not spill hers out this time. She just*

*looked at me as if she could not believe that I can smile chewing that kind of food. After four spoonfuls she forgot about the strange structure. (Journal 4.4.2012.)*

This new sequence with caregiver pacing and leading when eating had to be repeated three more times. With those repetitions NM grew accustomed to having "normal food" in day care.

Suhonen (2009, 97) and Bagdi & Vacca (2005, 145) point out the significance of shared positive experiences between a child and a caregiver. They also suggest that the nature of the guidance the child gets from the caregiver determines how secure the child feels. In these two cases (potty-training and transferring to normal food) the NLP approach directed the behavior of the caregiver and the child to a positive alternative. The children could have behaved differently – they could have resisted the caregiver – but they felt secure enough to choose to have a try with the alternative the caregiver offered. Giving choice – as NLP sees it – is not about setting or to force a new behavior, it means giving a set of choices and letting a person choose between them (Bandler 2008, 52-55). A child's behavior and map of the world may take a significant turn within few months if he or she feels accepted and valued and is given choices, as the following example shows.

*JQ often wonders around and does not engage to play with others. He also complains that he has nothing to do. His first reaction to everything is negative. (Journal. 19.3.2012.) JQ is playing with MN. MN (3 years 8 months) is dominating the play and he looks frustrated and disappointed. He does not try to change the situation. He plays along a turns more passive during the play. (Video 27.3.2012) We are getting dressed to get out. Smallest of the children need more help, and some of the 4-year-olds (JQ, OL) are whining and demanding me to help them. Instead of saying the usual – "in a minute" – I started to sing "auta, auta, pyydän sua…(help, help, I beg you)" from a Finnish song "Metsämökin ikkuna (A window of a cottage in the woods)". The children started to smile, and they sang the song with me, until and during it was their turn to get help. That became a habit of ours whenever somebody needed help urgently (in his/her own experience).(Journal 29.3.2012) JQ was having his negative mood again. I started talking to him and gradually guided him to a better mood. I guided him to change his physics first, asking him to imagine things (getting his eyes up), taking upright posture, and similarly led him to a better mood with my tone. He was very receptive to this. (Journal 25.4.2012.) JQ was feeling upset. He was sitting slouched and looking down. I asked him, why he feels this upset. He did not answer. I started to*

*talk and gradually and (secretly) guided him to change his posture. Suddenly, he said: "I know what you are doing. You are trying to make me feel better. " I asked him, if he does want to feel better. He said: "No, I want to feel bad." I nodded and smiled. I said with a caring tone: "In that case, I leave you to it." He looked at me once, and started to smile. Then he went to play with other children. (Journal 23.5.2012) JQ comes to me with his trousers. He said: "I don't know how to get this trouser leg." I said: "Let us look at it together. " I asked him to put his hand into the trouser leg and pull.. and then the other. He said: "I did not quite understand yet how to do it. " He came back with a sock-ball a while later. "I don't know what to do with this." I asked him to show it to me and that we could solve the puzzle together. He gives the sock to me. I take his hand, not the sock and ask him to pull at the other end. He said: "Oh, did not immediately figure this out." (Video 27.5.b.2012.)*

JQ's first reaction to everything was negative and in the beginning of our relationship he was not easily motivated to do things. He used to walk around, and played with the select few children. Usually that play turned hyperactive and at those moments, he seemed happy and smiled a lot. Otherwise, he appeared quite passive and was often having a bad mood, not wanting to do anything. I did not want to change what I thought was innate in him (that was the negative first reaction and need of strong inner or outer stimulus in order to feel engaged and happy). I wanted to show him, that he does not need to stay in negative state after the initial reaction, and I also wanted him to experience fun in less active functions.

Bandler and Thompson (2011, 587) argue that focusing on the negative leads to negative thinking and behavior, and focusing on different and better solutions leads to more positive outlook of the reality. According to them, this is not positive thinking, though, but brain science. Carr (2004, 13) gives similar indications when discussing Fredrickson's (2002) broaden-and-build theory; he claims that negative emotions may narrow people's momentary thought-action repertoires, and broadening those repertoires creates opportunities for building lasting personal resources which may lead to positive or adaptive growth in emotion, cognition and action. Broadening repertoires of thought and action resonates well to the idea of giving choice or enriching the maps.

Acceptance in JQ's case meant accepting his temperament (see Kalliala 2008, 256) – not trying to make a negative first reaction to positive and not trying to take away the need for strong activities in order to feel engaged. It meant giving him more choices for

what to do after the first (negative) reaction and ways to engage in strong physical activities without being told to calm down repeatedly. In his case, clear signs of acceptance by the caregiver, singing, sports and chunking down (see Ready & Burton 2004, 244) difficult tasks accompanied with Meta Model and Milton Model language patterns (see Bandler & Grinder 1975; see chapter 2.2) helped him change his behavior and feel happier than before. JQ also had an experience of acceptance from our first encounter and he knew could rely on me. So gradually, instead of whining about difficult clothes, he started to come to me to be able to "understand" how to deal with them by himself. This case seems to be an example of the idea of NLP:

> *Stated simply, the way you communicate with yourself and others (Linguistic) affects your nervous system at all levels (Neuro). This can be used to set up patterns of behavior (Programming). (Bandler & Thompson 2011, 234.)*

JQ's case seems to fit Ryan and Deci's (2000, 68) notion of the three innate psychological needs people have: competence, relatedness and autonomy. Ryan and Deci describe the terms of intrinsic motivation in their article and they argue that supporting competence and autonomy is essential for the development of intrinsic motivation. The support derives from the sense of relatedness or attachment to the caregiver. (Ryan & Deci 2000, 70-71.) NLP communication skills (including the language models) and techniques like reframing, eliciting and changing strategies and behavioral patterns seemed to enhance the supporting effect. The following example is about setting good directions for the toddlers. I had shown the three toddlers (GT, FU and IR) earlier that instead of just taking something from the other, they could extend their hand and say "thank you", and instead of pushing or pulling, they could stroke each other's arms and hair, I used the word "nicely" for it. None of them spoke yet, so this was something I knew they could do. I had to support and enhance this behavior by showing it every time they ran into argument.

> *GT (1 year 5 months) sat with me until FU was alright. She follows AZ writing the invitation and tries to imitate him. Then she goes back to play with FU. I hear them say "nicely" and "thank you". I enhance it with a smile and a gesture. GT and FU go to play in another room. Few minutes later GT and FU are fighting again." (Video 21.5b.2012)*

Toddlers need a constant support. However, they are able to use the positive choices in the presence of a supporting adult and when everything goes smoothly anyway. If the strategy of using Meta Model is to identify and change the impoverished and limiting representations or maps ((Bandler & Grinder 1975, 176) with spoken language, toddlers seem to need nonverbal communication as the main means to challenge their maps. The behavioral patterns of the toddlers seemed not self-centered but lacked of choice. Supported by an adult, the toddlers expressed empathy and care very easily. They also came to comfort other toddlers with the adult, if they were "in the sphere of adult supervision". This also seemed to fit Ryan & Deci's (2000, 71) idea that relatedness is important for the development of competence and autonomy. It also resonates to Hakkarainen's (2008b, 47-48) idea that the emotional quality between the participants is significant for challenging development in the zone of proximal development.

Hakkarainen (2008b, 48) argues, however, that learning within the zone of proximal development does not require a certain teacher. It is evident, that everybody learns something in any situation. However, according to this data, I argue that the caregiver or an educator has a significant effect on the direction of the learning. Small children seem to need somebody to show them the available choices. Otherwise, they are trapped in the programs they happen to be conditioned into. These cases prove that it does not have to be that way. I argue, that the Rogoff's (1990) theory of apprenticeship in thinking apply to behavior (other than particular cultural skills) as well. Rogoff (1990, 100) discusses how caregiver facilitates by sensitivity to children's competence their developing ability to take responsibility for managing different situations.

Niikko (2008,76-77) takes a strong stand for trust and communication in child-caregiver relationships. She claims that the caregivers who recognize the importance of trust in child-caregiver relationships are the agents of moral development and that the verbal and nonverbal communications are essential in it.

The experience of acceptance and trust are only possible, if a caregiver does things that can lead to them. Bandler and Fitzpatrick 2009, 252-253) give the power of improving relationships positively to "you". I argue, accordingly, that when it comes to early

childhood education and care, the power of improving relationships is with the educators and caregivers.

## 5.3 Joint activity – different but shared reality

Practicing NLP communication skills and behaving according to NLP presuppositions not only helped to build the relationships and trust – it lead to interesting phenomena of children engaging in activities even when they were not invited specifically to join in. It seemed that the relationship with the caregiver gave "permission" to join in any activity that appealed to the child. This example starts right after I had asked AZ to join me in choosing songs for the event next week.

> *JQ (4 years 10 months and IR (1 year 10 months) ran to sit on the table as we walk in to start planning. I ask them to sit down. OL (4 years) joins us too. I ask AZ what the song he wanted was. JQ said he wants "Simon says". I write it down. IR lies on the table and watches me write….I ask the children to look at the songbooks for something that catches their interest. JQ picks one poem. I start reading it. IR says "Kirsi reads, Kirsi reads" as if he was narrating my actions… OL finds a song which he does not know. I try to sing it. All of the children listen very carefully. JQ suggests the "Five little ducks". OL wants us to sing it right away. We start singing…. (Video 23.5. a.2012.)*

This particular situation was planned to be just for AZ and me. However, I had got used to the fact that some other children always wanted to engage in different activities with me. Sometimes I felt like a magnet. That was not always my preference since I "lost" some chances to practice Meta model questioning with the older children. In retrospect, I find it humbling to have gotten so much of children's affection in such a short period of time (3,5 months altogether). It also gave me clear indications of the significance of joint attention and activities in relating to one another.

Both Puroila (2002, 32) and Smith (1999) see joint attention as central part of interaction. The joint attention accompanied with joint activities provide subjects for interaction (Smith 1999, 96) and also engage and commit both children and the caregivers to the activity at hand (Puroila 2002, 75, 149). According to the data of this research, the children will naturally get interested in engaging in different activities with a caregiver or educator who has made the effort to connect with them and identified

their preferences. Not only the caregiver, but the child can also be an active participant in engaging a caregiver to joint activities. The following situation is an example of an active child.

> *FU (1 year 11 months) is already sitting at the table with Barbapapa book – his favorite book. AZ (6 years) is sitting at the table as well, drawing. The book is very familiar to FU, we have read it several times before. During the reading we have developed mutual gestures and picked up suitable songs for certain pictures or situations in the book. FU is imitating me and I imitate him. He puts his hand up to say "hi" or "bye" when the alien barbapapa enters and leaves in the book. He expects me to mirror him. He also gives hints of songs for rowing. AZ jumps in to our "conversation" but is actually talking to me alone. I also respond to AZ. FU turns up his volume, tone and intensity in his movements. I start saying names of barbapapas. FU shows me a figure and I say the name of it. FU repeats the last name. I get distracted when I answer AZ's question and FU waits for me to concentrate to our thing. He says the beginning of the book "Babba is sleeping – cannot see Babba". I read the beginning of the book to him. AZ participates to my reading, so we repeat it (it is FU's favorite part in the book). FU starts turning pages. I wait for him to find something that catches his interest. While he turns the pages, I give my attention to AZ. As I look at AZ, FU takes my chin gently and turns my attention back to him and the book. We are mirroring each other again. (Video 12.4.2012)*

It was obvious that FU was very well aware of where my attention was at each moment. We had created a unique way of communicating with each other since I could not understand most of his words. He also seemed to be very aware of pacing and leading (see chapter 2.2) and he demanded me to stay focused with his gestures, sounds and even by taking my chin and turning my attention back to him and the book. In retrospect, it is impossible to estimate how frustrating it was to FU to keep me focused with our joint activity, when AZ was demanding my attention as well. However, FU did a very good job at turning my attention back to our activity throughout its duration. It is also interesting that he used mostly gestures, sounds, songs and motions that we had created for our interaction purposes only. Previously, I had been the active party in utilizing them.

The previous example refers also to shared positive experiences which Bagdi & Vacca (2006, 145, 147) regard important for the development of social and emotional well-being. The reading experience had grown into a special way of relating, particularly

between FU and me. The reading experience was reciprocal and meaningful for all of the participants. However, a caregiver in this kind of situation should be aware that even though the experience was shared, it was different for each of the participants. NLP is very specific in arguing that no two people share the experience precisely (Bandler 2008, 23; see chapter 2.2). Accepting the idea of shared but different experiences or realities leads to curiosity about other person's experience. An educator or a caregiver who has NLP skills is capable of tapping into child's experience more deeply than an educator or caregiver who does not have those skills.

An educator or caregiver can create meaningful shared experiences from small or even mundane situations by committing to join children in their interests and activities. Using NLP communications skills not only helps the caregiver to join in – they build an intersubjective, unique relationship at the same time, as the previous and following example show.

> *The other children are having a nap. NM (12 months) has just arrived and had her nap earlier. I am playing with her. I sit in the chair and she is in my lap, facing me. She taps at the colorful figure on my T-shirt. I ask her: "Where is green?" She looks at my T-shirt, shows me the color and starts tapping on other colors waiting for me to name them. A short while later she starts pointing to the objects around us. I name them. She touches her ear and I ask: "Where is the ear?" She points to my mouth, nose and eyes and I name them. Then she returns to the colors. All of the sudden she leans forward and starts jumping and making rhythmical sounds. I ask her, if we are going to sing "I clap my hands" (Taputan, taputan, käsilläni taputan…)or "Ihhahhaa" (A horse-riding song). She looks into my eyes and starts singing "Ihhahhaa"… she takes a hold on my T-shirt and sings a long with me. She looks right into my eyes and smiles when the word "home" comes in the song. She leans her head against my chest…. (Video 27.5.a.2012)*

Rapport, pacing and leading (see chapter 2.2) together with communicating with and to all sensory systems seemed to provide shared meaningful experience in which the joint attention and joint activity were central elements. I called this episode a "conversation", because it felt as if we were really talking with each other. I was not "looking after" a child or "taking care" of the child, we were having a good time together. However, the situation itself provided an intense context for learning. Smith (1999, 96) argues that language is central to this kind of joint attention episodes. Language is the means of

communication even if the child's ability is limited. NLP provides a framework in which an educator or caregiver can use language with other means of communication effectively and meaningfully.

## 5.4 Relationship is a process and combination of attitudes/beliefs, behavior and skills

It is clear that caregiver's successful process of relating with children results in transformative or educational relationships. The data in this research provides examples of how a certain approach – NLP – in communicating and relating with children in early childhood settings changed the behavior of the group and especially of the children who took part the most. The following comments in the journal describe the group as it was in the beginning of the research and the end of the research:

> *Children seem to choose their activities quite freely. I seem to be the only one who really is with the children. This situation feels very chaotic. (J 6.3.12) The volume in the group is very high. The five-year-old boys run and push each other. I made friends with those boys by introducing new activities with an adult. (J 7.3.12)I found the boys throwing toys and pillows around the room. I told them to stop throwing and asked some of them to draw a target with me, and others to find soft balls. I organized them to throw rounds. We also gave ridiculous points from each hit in the target. (Journal 9.3.2012.)*

> *The children are so different from what they were in the beginning. In the mornings all of the children seek for personal contact with me. They are eager to take part in games and especially spontaneous singing or rhyming. (Journal 21.5.2012.)*

In the beginning the children were not very eager to get to know yet another new adult to their group. They had developed their own ways of getting through the day and they knew that the caregivers were available if they needed them. The children were encouraged to choose their activities from a wide set of possibilities. The relationships with caregivers were warm but distant. The caregivers were providers, regulators, helpers, and negotiators when necessary. The children occupied themselves in aimless activities (running and pushing each other) or in play. Daily activities (breakfast, play, going out, lunch, nap time, snack, and going out) gave the structure and rhythm for the days. Introducing new activities with an educator seemed very welcome. However, only

the youngest of the children and the two children whom I helped to release the distress in the drop offs were actually looking for those activities.

The situation with the group was quite different in the beginning of the second intervention. I had introduced spontaneous singing and rhyming to the children and they had a habit to join in whenever I started to sing or rhyme with a child. Children also came to me and asked for a certain song or a rhyme spontaneously. I joined in children's play providing them material, helping them build their play setting, giving them short storyline suggestions if the play was chaotic or caused tension between the players. The children seemed to welcome the activities introduced by adults and they also had the freedom to choose something else instead. The volume level in the group was lower than in the beginning. Especially transition to nap time was calmer and more individual than before. In the beginning children just went to the nap room, they were ordered to calm down there. Adults were caressing children just to keep them quiet. Especially the older children made the nap time a battle of wills. In the second intervention children were taken into the nap room individually and quietly. The music was already playing and every child was tucked in with a hug or a blow of imaginary sleeping sand. The children were guided to think nice and happy thoughts (their wishes, their favorite places, the dream they wanted to see) while they waited for the story or the time to get out of the bed (children who did not sleep).

Several factors contributed to the transformation of the group behavior. However, the data implies that without the effort of building and maintaining relationships with children, the other factors may have been inadequate. The children with whom I had the closest relationships (9 children) and a good relationship (4 children) were the ones that changed their behavior the most. The children who either did not participate in the research or the children with whom I had not yet built a relationship continued to behave pretty much the same, even though, they were exposed to all the same new activities as the rest of them.

Children are expected to act as independently as they are capable of in day care centers, since an adult often has to pay attention to and act on several things at the same time. The "octopus"-role can also be used as an excuse for not engaging in interaction with

children – even when it is possible. Routine relationships and scarce interaction may be considered normal. (Kalliala 2008, 34.) This phenomenon may be more universal than we know since researchers refer to several research which imply that the staff's interactions with children tend to be superficial (Jordan 2009, 40) or even avoidant (Kalliala 2008, 31-35). If the interaction is superficial or avoidant, so are the relationships.

Holkeri-Rinkinen (2009, 218) explains the child's possibilities to adult attention with the number of children in day care groups. However, she also emphasizes the importance of adult activity. Interaction can occur in many situations if the adult identifies the chances. The data in this research gives evidence that there really is no need to arrange interaction specifically. Rather, it occurs spontaneously if an adult is sensitive to the children. In this data, being sensitive meant using calibration, rapport, and pacing in order to tap into children's needs and experiences.

NLP Meta model regards the word "relationship" as a nominalization of a process (see Banler & Grinder 1975, 74). In this research, the data revealed some of the attitudes or beliefs, behaviors and skills which are essential in the process of relating well in day care. First of all, there needs to be a will to relate to the children and a will to respect their choices and interests (some of the children might prefer a more distant relationship). Second, it is useful to believe that you cannot know the children fully (different maps) but you can observe them carefully and instead of interpreting their behaviors you can just pace them to gain a better understanding (see Bandler 2008, 65). Other useful beliefs are: 1) children have a positive intention behind their behavior; 2) children's inappropriate behavior does not diminish their value as human beings; 3) children have the resources they need for change and develop within them; and 4) the meaning of your communication is in the responses you get from children.

Third, it is useful for an adult to behave in an educator's role. The adult is the responsible party in a relationship with a child (see Holkeri-Rinkinen 2009, 15; Kalliala 2008, 30). Interaction skills are the most important skills if an educator is to empower children (Jordan 2009, 43). NLP communication skills seem to resonate with the Jordan's (2009, 50) description of empowering interactions. According to Oxford

Dictionary (2013), to empower means to "give (someone) the authority or power to do something" and to "make (someone) stronger and more confident, especially in controlling their life and claiming their rights". Thus in this research, empowering interaction means communicating in a way which gives someone power to do something – confident in their right to experience control in the act of interaction. The following table compares NLP communication skills with empowering interactions:

Table 2. The comparison of NLP communication skills and Jordan's (2009, 50) list of empowering interactions

| **NLP communication skills** | **Empowering interactions (Jordan 2009, 50)** |
|---|---|
| *Calibration:* The ability to read another people's responses including eye-accessing cues. | Getting to know children really well. Checking if a child would accept the offered assistance. Entering children's fantasy play. Giving voice to and valuing children's activities. |
| *Pacing and leading:* The ability to mirror and adjust ones non-verbal and verbal communications to other people's communication and then changing the behavior by changing something in the communication. | Following children's leads, being aware of their interests. Allowing children to be silent. Not interrupting children's communication. Checking if a child would accept the offered assistance. Developing two-way intersubjectivity with children. |
| *The use of representational systems:* The ability to communicate in all representational systems and change a system when appropriate for learning. | Co-constructing meanings. Entering children's fantasy play. Developing two-way intersubjectivity with children. |
| *Meta Model and Milton Model:* The ability to identify ill-formedness in language, question it and help the other person to enrich his map by asking Meta Model questions or using Milton Model vague language. | Co-constructing meanings. Getting to know how children think. Using questioning techniques with no particular knowledge outcome expectations. Making links in children's thinking across time through revisiting their ideas and interests and/or making links between many sources of ideas. |

The first column of table 2 identifies NLP communication skills. The Jordan's (2009) list of interactions has been divided to the second column according to the link between the interaction and NLP communication skill. The comparison may clarify what kind of impact NLP communication skills have in empowering children.

Fourth, positivity is resource. According to Carr (2004, 12) positive emotions broaden our attention and awareness of the surroundings, prepares us to be open to new ideas and practices. Positivity – in NLP point of view – is a skill. Bandler (2008, 53) argues that it is not possible to be happy, but it is possible to learn how to do things happily. In this data, the adult's response to child's negative emotions, moods, or behavior was not negative. Pattern interrupts, anchors, techniques in changing states or strategies (see

chapter 2.2) made it possible to respond caringly, positively and pedagogically to most of the situations. If a child needed to be stopped from harming himself or other children, simple “Stop” or “No”, uttered firmly, was enough.

Children respond to positive approach with positivity (Kalliala 2008, 30). The interventions gave evidence that positivity also enhances the child-adult interaction and thus the child-adult relationships. According to Suhonen (2009, 99-100), children are most committed to the activities when the guidance is interactive. She also point out that the adults use more language when the guidance is interactive.

The child and the educator are always in some kind of relationship (Holkeri-Rinkinen 2009, 15). In the data of this research, the quality of the relationship depended on the educator’s attitudes, beliefs, skills and behaviors. The data also gave evidence that the relationship is essentially a process, and as a process, open for change. According to Richie and Howes (2003, 498) it is more likely to achieve a secure relationship if the caregiver is highly sensitive, consistently positive, and committed to the loving caregiver role. To my experience the process of relating (building and maintaining a relationship) not only needs those qualities, it also improves them.

# 6 CONCLUSIONS

The aim of this research was to take NLP, a system and an approach designed to promote well-being, and study how it works in early childhood education setting with children from 1 to 5 years of age. The study was conducted as an action research which gave me an opportunity to increase my understanding and practice of using NLP as a pedagogical approach.

I had one primary question for the research: "In what ways can neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) renew early childhood education pedagogics?" The question was a relevant starting point, since very little or no research had been conducted in the area of NLP in early childhood education (see chapter 2.3). I intended to get the answers to the primary question by answering to two sub-questions: 1) How to apply the principles, the techniques and the methods of NLP with children from 1 to 5 years of age, and 2) What methods and techniques of NLP require a modification in order to work with children and what would those modifications be.

The action research was conducted in different phases which formed a spiral. Spiral form in action research means that the researcher goes back to previous phases in order to plan for the next phase. Data was gathered in a sibling group of a day care center. The analysis was done in three phases (see chapters 4 and 5). The first two analyses gave results for five major areas of early childhood education (see chapter 4.2.3) from which I chose child-caregiver relationships and communication for the third analysis. Covering all of those five areas in master's dissertations would have been too great a job.

I identified four viewpoints of relationships in the data: 1) building relationships and trust, 2) experiences of being accepted, valued and taken care of, 3) joint attention and activity, and 4) relationships as relations – a combination of beliefs, behaviors and skills. These viewpoints offered the basis for finding out how NLP contributes to relationships in early childhood education.

NLP communication skills played a significant role in building relationships with the children whether the child was a newcomer, had been distressed during drop offs for lengthy amount of time, or was meeting me for the first time. Using NLP in the first encounters or at the very beginning of the acquaintance created feelings of security, attachment and trust.

As the relationship develops, feelings of being valued, accepted and cared are important for positive development. NLP has presuppositions which guide the educator's or caregiver's thinking and behavior to a positive direction. Accompanied with NLP skills and pedagogical tact the children got experiences of being accepted and valued – no matter what their behavior was. Yet, their behavior changed for the better at the same time. Children also found some release in confessing their "bad" behavior to the educator, which is a sign of deep trust. Children started to turn to their most trusted educator or caregiver in majority of their matters – especially in their distress – even if they were with another educator or caregiver.

Using NLP continued to develop the relationships by adding genuinely joint attention and intersubjective interaction to joint activities. Since each participant in joint activities brings forth their unique understandings of the situation, they also experience the shared activity differently. One-to-one joint activities seemed to make every relationship with a child unique in the ways of communicating. Children became eager to participate in those situations – even uninvited. I argue that children learned to enjoy the joint activities because of their spontaneity and the feeling of intimacy. NLP aims to create well-being and the joint attention and activity episodes provide an example of the impact NLP has on child-caregiver relationships.

During the process of relating with the caregiver or educator the group's and individual children's behavior changed significantly. This result is consistent with Coull's (2010), Blanchett's (2010), Burns's (2010), Lightley's (2010), and Tait's (2010) findings in their action research (see chapter 2.3.1). The change was biggest with the children who were exposed to NLP the most. The quality of child-caregiver relationship seemed to benefit significantly from NLP. Not only the child-caregiver relationship, but also individual children were empowered by the interaction based on NLP.

To answer the research questions, these results give implications that NLP can provide tools for renewing early childhood education. This research points out the possibilities to enhance child-caregiver relationships in early childhood education, and the empowering impact NLP can have on children. According to these results NLP's principles, communication skills and language models apply to early childhood education if the practitioner is acquainted with pedagogy and development of small children. Some of the techniques of NLP – for example anchoring – apply directly to early childhood education. However, NLP practitioner needs to learn to program and practice NLP in any situation on the fly. You cannot sit a small child down for programming; you need to learn to program in play and during the normal activities with children. The nonverbal communication is also high-lightened in interaction with small children.

The evaluation of the importance of this research is best served by stating some of the comments which some of the parents gave when I introduced the results to them. The parents had noticed that the children used a certain anchor (thumbs up) at home. The parents reported that their children sing a lot at home – they even sing the everyday tasks and their protests. Parents said that they had started to sing with the children. Parents of one child told that their child, who could not speak yet, sang a vast variety of songs in clear Finnish at home. I believe that something that takes place in day care has certainly an impact, if parents notice the difference in their children at home.

This research is probably the first research on NLP which includes children from the age of 10 months to five years. That itself is a guarantee of the novelty of this research subject. The NLP society can evaluate the significance of this research for NLP better than me. The significance of this research to me as a kindergarten teacher, pedagogue and NLP practitioner is immense, therefore I cannot give a realistic, general evaluation of it. I believe that early childhood education would benefit if more of its personnel adopted NLP as their work method. At least, the child-caregiver relationships would improve and the children would get the experience of being empowered probably more often than they do now in day care.

The ethicality of this research has been conducted according to the description in chapter 3.4.2. Children were not exposed to any harm by this research. Their participation in the research was based on volunteerism. They knew that every time the camera, dictation machine or my journal was present, they could decide whether to join in or not. Therefore, some of the children are more present in the report than the others. I protected children's privacy by giving them codes which consisted of two capital letters. I have also edited the video material which I am allowed to show when I give presentations of this study. However, I have made a promise in the consent paper that I will not publish that material.

Action research is an approach which changes reality and therefore it is impossible to evaluate its reliability in the traditional way. The researcher is an active participant in the research, and therefore the action research method is very subjective in nature. Therefore, Lincoln and Guba have suggested that action research should undergo an examination of trustworthiness which includes four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. (Stringer 2004, 55-57.)

The credibility of action research is fulfilled if the study is plausible and has integrity. The purpose for evaluating credibility is to minimize biases and personal viewpoints and to provide evidence of rigorous procedure. (Stringer 2004, 57.) In this research, the credibility was established by prolonged engagement, persistent observation, triangulation, referential adequacy (see Stringer 2004, 57-58).

I spent 3,5 months in the research context and took a role as a member of the staff. I adopted the pedagogical culture of the day care center and learned the ways of conduct in the child group I was working in by interviewing my team members. This prolonged engagement assured, that the research context was as natural as it can get. I made systematic observations throughout my engagement. I had a journal and had a dictation machine with me during the observation period and I recorded the observations daily. During the interventions I used journal, dictation machine and video camera for recording. That said, I later abandoned the data from the dictation machine in intervention periods, because I realized, that just hearing the talk or a situation does not

give relevant evidence to be qualified as research findings. In journal the recordings were more detailed and the video material presents the data as it was.

According to Stringer (2004, 57-58), triangulation or using multiple and different sources, methods, and perspectives to illuminate the research problem form the base for working towards the research outcomes. In this research triangulation was implemented in two ways. I collected three sets of data (journal, video, and audio) and I had three stakeholders (me, my team members, and parents) to evaluate the results from their points of view.

The need for concepts and structures of meaning within the study to reflect the perspectives, observations, and language of the participants refers to referential adequacy (Stringer 2004, 58). I grounded my language in reporting to my position as a researcher, NLP practitioner, and a kindergarten teacher. I also used the exact language I had used in recording the journal, or in naming the video clips as I identified the epiphanies (see chapter 5). I also used parents' and team members' language when describing their points of view.

The results of a qualitative action research cannot be generalized. However, the results may be transferred to other settings, if the details of the context and participants are described carefully enough. (Stringer 2004, 59.) The results of this study are likely to be transferred in any early education setting if the educators or caregivers have an adequate pedagogical and NLP training. In order to establish dependability I have done my best to describe the research process carefully and accurately in this report. I have stored all the material and data which has been produced during the research process to establish confirmability.

Stringer (2004, 60) describes yet another criteria for action research – utility of the outcomes of the research. If effective actions are enabled, the validity of the research is high. This research process not only enabled me to develop as a pedagogue, kindergarten teacher and NLP practitioner, it has also given me new perspectives as a NLP trainer. It is my firm belief, that these results can be transferred to early childhood education and care as well. There are several fields to which I would like to transfer the

results of this study: vocational training, teacher training, parent counseling, to name a few. These results have also given me motivation to study this subject even more.

In my opinion, NLP in early childhood education is worth studying more. This data left four research subjects uncovered – learning, emotional skills, child development, and pedagogical requirements – though the results of this research imply that interesting phenomena occurred in children's learning, in their ability to deal with emotions, and in their development. I, personally, would like to conduct research to answer the following questions which remained unanswered in this research: How does NLP benefit the children's learning and how does it broaden the theoretical discussion on children's learning? In what ways can emotional skills of children be supported by NLP? How does the development of the children exposed to NLP differ from the development of the children who are not? What are the pedagogical requirements for NLP pedagogue?

*Imagine the children go through their first years with minimal unnecessary distress and uneasiness. Imagine children feeling themselves accepted, cared for and safe. Imagine them not feeling let down by the adults in their lives. Imagine the children being able to use all their senses effectively when playing, learning and interacting with this world. Imagine if a parent or a caretaker could calm the child down quickly, and deal with the cause of distress, disappointment or frustration with empowering interaction.*

# REFERENCES

Bagdi, A. & Vacca, J. 2005. Supporting Early Childhood Social-Emotional Well Being: The Building Blocks for Early Learning and School Success. Early Childhood Education Journal, Vol. 33, No. 3. DOI: 10.1007/s10643-005-0038-y. 145-150.

Bandler, R. 2008. Richard Bandler's Guide to Trance-formation. How to harness the power of hypnosis to ignite effortless and lasting change. Deerfield Beach, Florida: Health Communications, Inc.

Bandler, R. & Fitzpatrick, O. 2009. Conversations. Freedom is Everything & Love is All the Rest. Deerfield Beach, Florida: Health Communications, Inc.

Bandler, R. & Grinder, J. 1975. The Structure of Magic. A Book about Language and Therapy. Palo Alto, California: Science and Behavior Books, Inc.

Bandler, R. & Grinder, J. 1979. frogs into PRINCES. Neuro Linguistic Programming™. Utah: Real People Press.

Bandler, R. & LaValle, J. 2011. Charisma Enchantment™ and Trainer Training. Training manual. United States of America: KAT Publishers.

Bandler, R. & MacDonald, W. 1988. An Insider's Guide to Sub-Modalities. Capitola, CA. Meta Publications, Inc.

Bandler, R. & Thompson, G. 2011. The Secrets of Being Happy. The Technology of Hope, Health, and Harmony. I.M. Press, Inc. Kindle version.

Blanchett, N. 2010. Language Patterns at Work. In Churches, R. & West-Burnham, J. 2008. Leading learning through relationships: the implications of Neuro-linguistic programming for personalisation and the children's agenda in England. Reading: CfBT Education Trust. 68-69.

Ben-Arieh, A. Indicators and Indices of Children's Well-being: towards a more policy-oriented perspective. European Journal of Education. Mar2008, Vol. 43, Issue 1, p37-50.

Bowlby, J. 1982. Attachment and loss; vol. 2: Separation: Anxiety and anger. London: Harmondsworth, Hogarth, Penguin.

Boud, D. & Walker, D. 1998. Promoting relection in professional courses: The challenge of context. Studies in Higher Education. 1998. June. Vol. 23 Issue 2.

Burns, T. 2010 . Sounds Good. In Churches, R. & West-Burnham, J. 2008. Leading learning through relationships: the implications of Neuro-linguistic programming for personalisation and the children's agenda in England. Reading: CfBT Education Trust. 78-79.

Carey, J., Churches, R., Hutchinson, G., Jones, J. & Tosey, P. 2010. Neuro-linguistic programming and learning: teacher case studies on the impact of NLP in education. Reading. CfBT Education Trust.

Carr, A. 2004. Positive psychology. The science of happiness and human strengths. Hove and New York: Brunner-Routledge.

Causer, L. 2010. State and Language 2. In Churches, R. & West-Burnham, J. 2008. Leading learning through relationships: the implications of Neuro-linguistic programming for personalisation and the children's agenda in England. Reading: CfBT Education Trust. 80-83.

Churches, R. & West-Burnham, J. 2008. Leading learning through relationships: the implications of Neuro-linguistic programming for personalisation and the children's agenda in England. Reading: CfBT Education Trust.

Coull, R. 2010. Improving Behaviour. In Churches, R. & West-Burnham, J. 2008. Leading learning through relationships: the implications of Neuro-linguistic programming for personalisation and the children's agenda in England. Reading: CfBT Education Trust. 61-62.

Cramm, J. & Nieboer, A.P. 2012. Longitudinal Study of Parent's Impact on Quality of Children and Young Adults with Intellectual Disabilities. Journal of Applied Research in Intellectual Disabilities. Jan2012, Vol. 25 Issue 1, 20-28.

Datler, W., Ereky-Stevens, K., Hover-Reisner, N. & Malmberg, L-E. 2012. Toddlers' transition to out-of-home day care: Settling into a new care environment. Infant Behavior & Development. 2012, 35, 439-451.

DeHart, G. B., Sroufe, L.A. & Cooper, R. G. 2004. Child Development. Its Nature and Course. Fifth Edition. New York: McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc.

Dilts, R. 1998. Modeling With NLP. Capitola, CA: Meta Publications.

Dilts, R. 1999. Sleight of Mouth. The Magic of Conversational Belief Change. Capitola, California: Meta Publications.

Eraut, M. 1995. Schon-shock: a case for reframing reflection-in-action. Teachers and Teaching: Theory and Practice, Vol 1 Issue 1. 9-22.

Furman, B. 2003. Muksuoppi. Ratkaisun avaimet lapsen ongelmiin. Helsinki: Kustannusosakeyhtiö Tammi.

Greenwood, J. 1998. The role of reflection in single and double loop learning. Journal of Advanced Nursing. 1998. 27, 1048-1053.

Grinder, J. & Bandler, R. 1976. The Structure of Magic II. A Book about Communication and Change. Palo Alto, California: Science and Behavior Books, Inc.

Grinder, J. & DeLozier, J. 1987. Turtles all the way down. Prerequisites To Personal Genius. Scotts Valley, CA: Grinder & Associates.

Hakkarainen Pentti. 2008b. Lähikehityksen vyöhyke. Helenius Aili & Korhonen Riitta (toim.) 2008. Pedagogiikan palikat. Johdatus varhaiskasvatukseen ja –kehitykseen. Helsinki: WSOY Oppimateriaalit Oy. 45-49.

Hall, L.M. & Belnap. B. 2008. The Sourcebook of Magic. A Comprehensive Guide to NLP Change Patterns. Second edition. Carmathen. UK: Crown House Publishing Limited.

Harper, C., Jones, N., Pereznieto, P. & McKay, A. 2011. Promoting Children's Well-being: Policy Lessons from Past and Present Economic Crises. Development Policy Review. Sep2011. Vol. 29 Issue 5, p621-641.

Heikkinen, H.L.T. 2007. Toimintatutkimus – toiminnan ja ajattelun taitoa. In Aaltola, J. & Valli, R. (edit.) 2007. Ikkunoita tutkimusmetodeihin I. 2. painos. Juva: PS-kustannus.

Hemmeter, M.L., Ostrosky, M. & Fox, L. 2006. Social and Emotional Foundations for Early Learning: A Conceptual Model for Intervention. School Psychology Review, 2006, Vol. 35, No. 4. 583-601.

Hiltunen, S., Kiviaho, M. & Vikeväinen-Tervonen, L. 2003. NLP perusteet. Tampere: Tampere yliopistopaino.

Holkeri-Rinkinen, L. 2009. Aikuinen ja lapsi vuorovaikutusta rakentamassa. Diskurssianalyyttinen tutkimus päiväkodin arjesta. Tampere: Tampereen Yliopistopaino Oy.

Holland, L. 2010. Small Change, Big Impact. In Churches, R. & West-Burnham, J. 2008. Leading learning through relationships: the implications of Neuro-linguistic programming for personalisation and the children's agenda in England. Reading: CfBT Education Trust. 77-78.

Howes, C. & Shivers E.M. 2006. New Child-Caregiver Attachment Relationships: Entering Childcare When the Caregiver Is and Is Not an Ethnic Match. Social Development. Nov2006. Vol 15 Issue 4, 574-590.

Huttunen, E. 1989. Miksi tarvitaan keskustelua päivähoidosta. In Huttunen, E. & Niiranen, P. (edit.) Onko lapsen hyvä olla päivähoidossa: puheenvuoroja päivähoidosta. Jyväskylä: Gummerus, 9-11.

Jordan, B. 2009. Scaffolding learning and co-constructing understandings. In Anning, A., Cullen & Fleer (edit.) Early Childhood Education. Society & Culture. Trowbridge, Wiltshire: SAGE Publications. 39-52.

Kalliala, M. 2008. Kato mua! Kohtaako aikuinen lapsen päivähoidossa. Helsinki: Gaudeamus.

Kauppinen (toim.) 2011. Lapsen ääni – tarina sinulle. Pelastakaa Lapset ry.

Laki lasten päivähoidosta 19.1.1973/36.
http://www.finlex.fi/fi/laki/ajantasa/1973/19730036

Lightley, L. 2010. Thank You for the Music. In Churches, R. & West-Burnham, J. 2008. Leading learning through relationships: the implications of Neuro-linguistic programming for personalisation and the children's agenda in England. Reading: CfBT Education Trust. 85-86.

Lundan, A. 2009. Kutsu dialogisuuten. Diskurssianalyyttinen tapaustutkimus kasvattajan ja lapsen haasteellisesta vuorovaikutuksesta päiväkodissa. Tampere: Acta Electronica Universitatis Tamperensis 897.

Mardell, B. 1992. A practitioner's perspective on the implications of attachment theory for daycare professionals. Child Study Journal; Sept92, Vol. 22 Issue 3. 201 -233.

Newton, J. 2010. Ready to Learn. In Churches, R. & West-Burnham, J. 2008. Leading learning through relationships: the implications of Neuro-linguistic programming for personalisation and the children's agenda in England. Reading: CfBT Education Trust. 76-77.

Niikko Anneli. 2008. Perustoimintojen pedagogiikka. Teoksessa Helenius Aili & Korhonen Riitta (toim.) 2008. Pedagogiikan palikat. Johdatus varhaiskasvatukseen ja –kehitykseen. Helsinki: WSOY Oppimateriaalit Oy. 69-77.

Norton, L. S. 2009. Action Research in Teaching and Learning. A practical guide to conducting pedagogical research in universities. New York: Routledge.

O´Connell Rust, F. 2007. Action Research in Early Childhood Contexts. In Hatch, A.J. (edit). 2007. Early Childhood Qualitative Research. New York: Routledge. 95-96.

Ojanen, M. 2007. Positiivinen psykologia. Helsinki: Edita.

Puroila, A-M. 2002. Kohtaamisia päiväkotiarjessa – kehysanalyyttinen näkökulma varhaiskasvatustyöhön. Oulu: University Press.

Ready, R. & Burton, K. 2004. Neuro-linguistic Programming for Dummies. Chichester, West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.

Ritchie, S. & Howes C. 2003. Program practices, caregiver stability, and child-caregiver relationships. Applied Developmental Psychology 24 (2003) 497-516.

Rogoff,B. 1990. Apprenticeship in Thinking. Cognitive Development in Social Context. New York: Oxford University Press.

Rutanen, N. 2007. Water in Action. Encounters among 2- to 3-Year-Old Children, Adults, and Water in Day Care. Social Psychological Studies 15. Departent of Social Psychology. University of Helsinki.

Ryan, R.M. & Deci E. L. 2000. Self-Determination Theory and the Facilitation of Intrinsic Motivation, Social Development, and Well-Being. American Psychologist, Vol. 55, No. 1, 68-78.

Schön, D. A. 1995. The reflective practitioner: how professionals think in action. Aldershot: Arena.

Smith, A. B. 1999. Quality Childcare and Joint Attention. International Journal of Early Years Education, Vol. 7, No. 1, 1999. 85-98.

Stelter, R. L. & Halberstadt, A. G. 2011. The interplay between parental beliefs bouts children's emotions and parental stress impacts children's attachment security. Infant & Child Development. May/Jun2011, Vol. 20 Issue 3, p272-287.

Stringer, E.T. 2004. Action Research in Education. New Jersey: Pearson, Merrill, Prentice Hall.

Suhonen, E. 2009. Erityistä tukea tarvitsevan taaperon sopeutuminen päiväkotiryhmään. Monitapaustutkimus vuorovaikutussuhteista ja niiden rakentumisesta. Tutkimuksia 304. Helsinki: Yliopistopaino.

STAKES. 2005. Sosiaali- ja terveysalan tutkimuskeskus. Varhaiskasvatussuunnitelman perusteet (Oppaita 56). 2. tarkastettu painos. Saarijärvi: Gummerus Kirjapaino Oy.

Syrjälä, L.1996. Toimintatutkimus ja opettajan ammatillinen kasvu. Teoksessa Syrjälä, L., Ahonen,S., Syrjäläinen, E. & Saari. S. 1996. Laadullisen tutkimuksen työtapoja. Rauma: Kirjayhtymä. 25-55.

Tait, E. 2010. Visualisation and Anchors. In Churches, R. & West-Burnham, J. 2008. Leading learning through relationships: the implications of Neuro-linguistic programming for personalisation and the children's agenda in England. Reading: CfBT Education Trust. 88-90.

Timmermans, S. & Tavory, I. 2012. Theory Construction in Qualitative Research: From Grounded Theory to Abductive Analysis. Sosiological Theory 2012 30:167.

Toikko, T. & Rantanen, T. 2009. Tutkimuksellinen kehittämistoiminta. Tampere: Tampere Yliopistopaino Oy.

Tomal, Daniel, R. 2003. Action research for educators. Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Education.

Tosey, P & Mathison, J. 2006. Introducing Neuro-Linguistic Programming. http://www.som.surrey.ac.uk/NLP/Resources/IntroducingNLP.pdf. Accessed 11.11.2011.

Tosey, P., Mathison, J. & Michelli, D. 2005. Mapping Transformative Learning. The Potential of Neuro-Linguistic Programming in Journal of Transformative Education, 3:2:140-167.

Tutkimuseettinen neuvottelukunta. 2009. Humanistisen, yhteiskuntatieteellisen ja käyttäytymistieteellisen tutkimuksen eettiset periaatteet ja ehdotus eettisen ennakkoarvioinninjärjestämiseksi. www.tenk.fi/sites/tenki.fi/files/eettisetperiaatteet.pdf.

Värri, V-M. 2002. Hyvä kasvatus – kasvatus hyvään. Dialogisen kasvatuksen filosofinen tarkastelu erityisesti vanhemmuuden näkökulmasta. 4. painos. Tampere: Tampere University Press.

www.oxfordictionaries.com/definition/english/empower